

PARCEL 13

by

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## Parcel 13 -- Abstract

## Part One -- Parcel 13 Now

Parcel 13 is a small, highly-visible block in Boston. Although owner disinvestment has been encouraged by a ten year old plan for demolition and new construction of a luxury apartment tower, the Parcel is still serviceable. Both housing and commercial spaces are well suited, in price and size, and location, to the needs of tenants on the site. Many businesses are thriving and might expand if circumstances were favorable. Most residential tenants are equally committed to remaining on the Parcel.

Over half of the 145 residents are long-term, low income tenants, with a disproportionate number of elderly women and young men. With monthly rents at about \$114 per unit, there are very few vacancies except in damaged single rooms. Most businesses are long-established. Average commercial rents are 26¢ per square foot monthly.

## Part Two -- The Fenway

The Fenway is a well defined, distinct area, which is subdivided by major streets into several discrete districts. Except for several new buildings, it is a low rise neighborhood with adequate open space and public transportation. Shopping facilities, though diminished by urban renewal demolition, are still sufficient. Churches, hospitals, and schools own the bulk of the buildable land.

The Fenway has a great variety of organizations with varying degrees of viability. Some are interest groups for tenants, owner-occupants, landlords, business people, and institutions; others provide social services for all age groups.

Between 1960 and 1970, there were extensive demographic changes in the Fenway. The percentage of children and elderly residents declined, with a great increase in the proportion of younger 'unrelated individuals.' There were also striking increases in vacancy, transiency, and mobility rates. The shape of the income distribution scale was much altered; low income families moved out, and by 1970 there was a noticeable net gain in families in the \$10,000 - \$25,000+ range. The number of new and rehabilitated apartments which either have been or definitely will be built does not equal the number of low-rent apartments removed for new development, especially in the category of multi-bedroom apartments,

## Part Three -- The Fenway Plan and Renewal Politics

The major impetus for the Fenway Plan was the desire of the most salient landowner, the Christian Science Church, to expand its facilities and improve the appearance of its surroundings. Spending by institutions within the planning district greatly reduced the local cash requirement for federal grants. The resultant plan called for improved housing, commercial space, and other benefits.

At first, the major objections to the Fenway Plan came from shopkeepers and property owners whose buildings were slated for demolition. Eventually, local tenants realized that very few low rent apartments would be constructed, and the forces of resistance were marshalled. Class action litigation delayed renewal activity and provided for a Project Advisory Committee. Seats on the PAC have been held, for the most part, by proponents of the Fenway Plan, to the disappointment of the plaintiffs.

Controversy over the plan divided many of the more active residents into two factions of plan supporters and opponents. Supporters believe that the main task is to improve the physical appearance of the district. Opponents believe that other issues should be subordinated to protecting the interests of low and moderate income tenants.

To date, the Fenway Plan has produced street improvements, a park, a hotel, an elderly housing project, and a large block of apartments and street floor stores with rent-up problems. The Church's building program is complete. Development came to a standstill on three of the most prominent disposition parcels. Recession and changing federal policies made new high rent apartments infeasible and slowed market activity for older townhouses and apartment buildings. For these reasons, demographic changes were not as drastic as those in nearby renewal areas.

#### Part Four -- The Prospects for Parcel 13

In January of 1975, it seemed that enough public money would be available to redevelop Parcel 13 and that the probability of demolition would be increased by Boston Redevelopment Authority acquisition, at no cost, of the largest property on the block. But the Project Advisory Committee rejected plans for Boylston Towers, a high rent, 25-story building, and arranged for a Parcel survey and a design study. Several alternate building programs were to be devised. The studies concluded that Boylston Towers was aesthetically and socially incompatible with the needs of the neighborhood. For the first time, the financial feasibility of the proposed project was questioned. Favored options were for a new construction under twelve stories, or for a mixture of new and rehabilitated buildings.

The BRA Task Force also worked on construction alternatives and established criteria for project review. Since the options for low rise building or rehabilitation were deemed infeasible, the Task Force recommended the construction of a building much like Boylston Towers, but with a park instead of a garage. But FenPAC and Parcel representatives on the Task Force believed that false assumptions about alternative project costs and future income possibilities were the basis for erroneous conclusions. The planning process itself, it was said, was conducted with insufficient attention to the wishes of Parcel users.

Resistance to Boylston Towers was carried on by the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee, who insisted that the block be rehabilitated at rentals which all current tenants could afford. The immediate demand was for the rejection of Robert LaCentra as designated developer. This objective was furthered at a September meeting with LaCentra, who proved to be tactless and uncooperative. By January, 1976, the PAC was ready for a unanimous vote requesting BRA dedesignation of the Boylston Towers



Association. To date, the BRA has failed to act on this request.

The controversy of Parcel 13 brought forth many suggestions about suitable uses and exterior improvements for the block, which is well situated for both housing and businesses, especially those which service performing arts. Rehabilitation might be accomplished by a single developer or a neighborhood development group, or by restoring the properties to individual ownership for more modest repairs, after designating the block as a disposition parcel. For either of these options, the major considerations are the form of tenure, financing, and protection of tenant interests.

Conclusions are that the Fenway Plan was attenuated by the contradiction between financial feasibility on the one hand and aesthetic and socio-economic desiderata on the other. The incompatibility of these criteria for development was not at first apparent. The likely result is that urban renewal projects will either succeed in the usual sense, causing drastic demographic shifts, or fall short of target, leaving tenants in continued occupancy of a stagnant and shabby neighborhood.

## RESUME

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Street Organizing - Bay Village Association (a neighborhood improvement group).

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# PARCEL 13



*southeast corner  
the Wermans' building*



*northeast corner  
the Bentley Smoker*



*northwest corner  
the Fenway Club*



*southwest corner  
the Parkgate*



## Table of Contents

Introduction	I.
Part One    Parcel 13 Now	
I    A Tour of the Block	1.
II   Pedestrians on Parcel 13	25.
III  Parcel 13 -- Statistical Summary	31.
Part Two    The Fenway	
I    Description	37.
II   An Inventory of Fenway Organizations	45.
III  Demographic Data	49.
Part Three  The Fenway Plan and Renewal Politics	
I    The Plan and Public Opinion	60.
II   Planning the Fenway's Future -- Two Viewpoints	80.
III  Commentary	90.
Part Four   The Prospects for Parcel 13	
I    A Narrative of Events	94.
II   Uses and Reuses for Parcel 13	127.
III  Implementation of the Rehabilitation Option	133.
IV   Conclusions	142.
Notes	147.

## Maps, Sketches, Tables

Boston Project Areas	IA
Fenway Plan Boundary	IB
Parcel 13 sketch	1A
Parcel 13 plan	1B
The Fenway and Vicinity	37A
The East Fenway	38A
Census Tracts -- 1960	49A
Census Tracts -- 1970	49B
Family Income Distribution, 1960 - 1970	59
Fenway Plan Boundary	60A
FenPAC Voting Districts -- 1976	77A
Parcel 13 sketch	94A
Recommendations of PAC Design Study	108A
Model 1	109A
Model 2	109B
Model 3	109C
Model 4	109D
Model 5	109E
La Centra Proposal, Option 1	113A
Costs and Revenues, Option 1	113B,C
Option 2	114A
Costs and Revenues, Option 2	114B,C
Option 3	114D
Option 4	114E

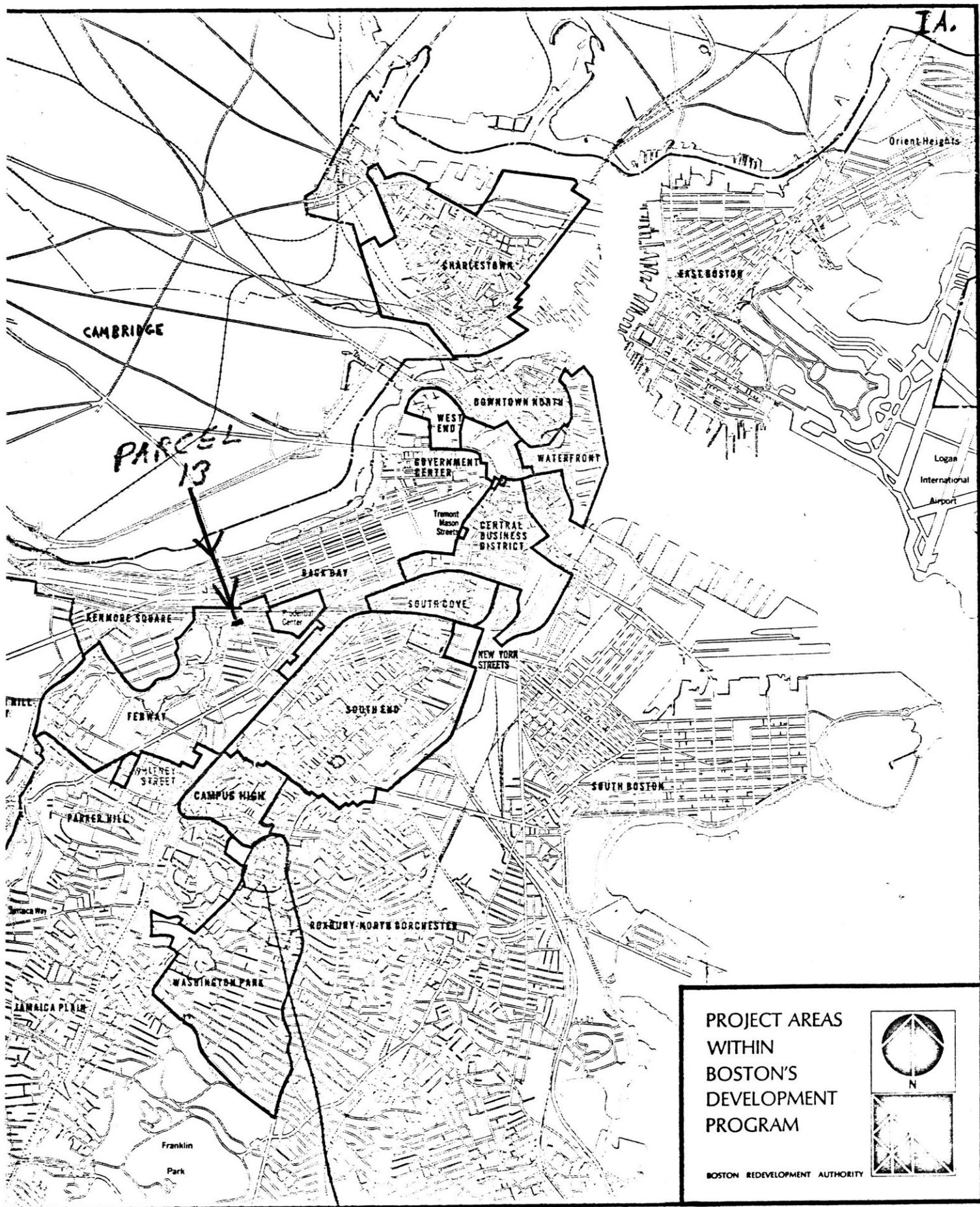
Option 5	114F
Option 6	115A
Public Costs/Benefits	116A
Option 7, Rehabilitation Costs and Income	119A
Fenway Club Rents and Rehabilitation Costs	120A
Parcel 13 plan	130A

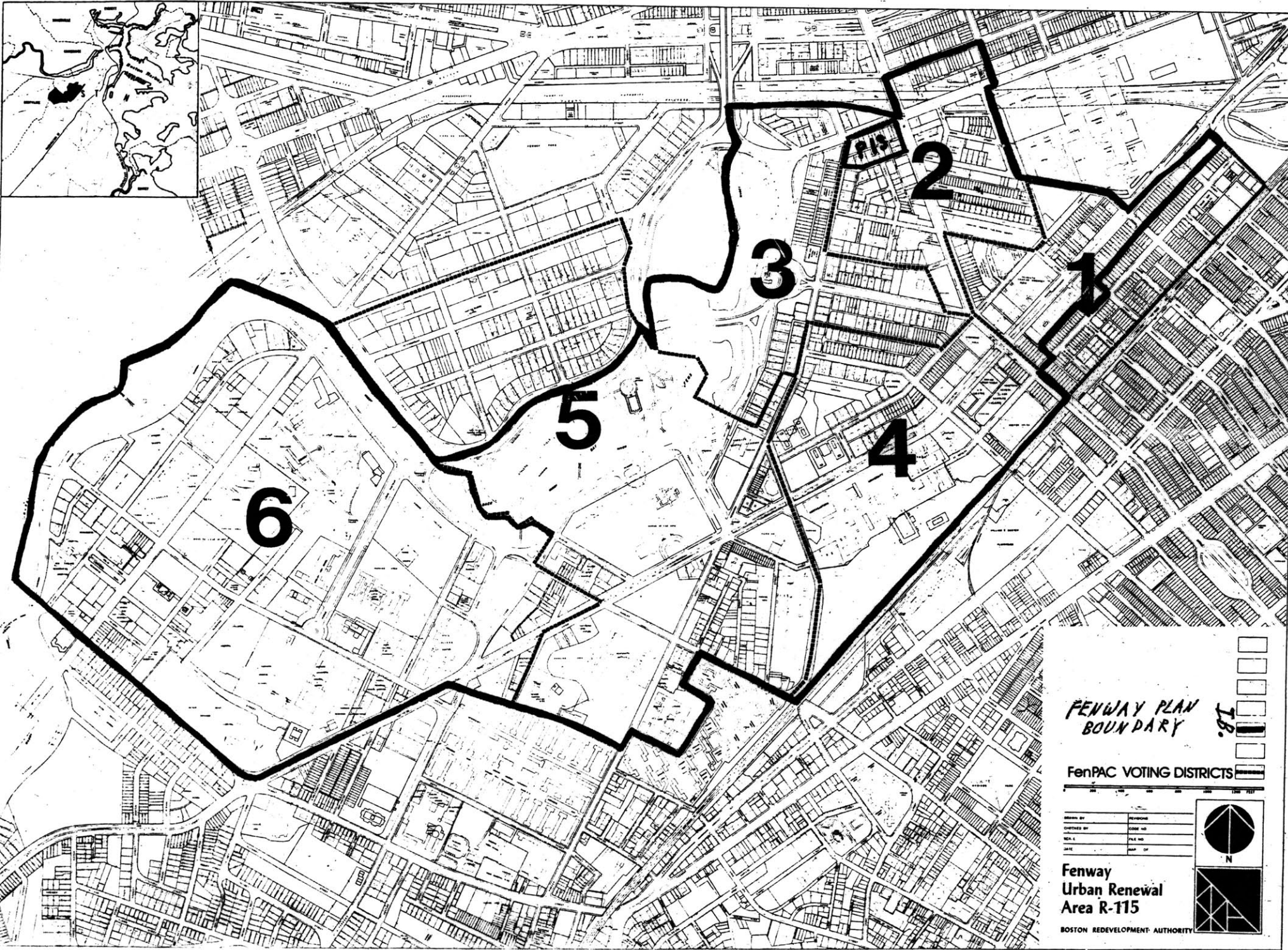
### Introduction

Parcel 13 is a 70,000 square-foot block in the East Fenway section of Boston, about a mile and a half west of the Common. It is bounded by Massachusetts Avenue on the east, Boylston Street on the north, Hemenway Street on the west, and Haviland Street on the south. The thirteen buildings, ranging in height from three to seven stories, contain 32 small businesses and 105 occupied housing units, from single rooms to three-bedroom apartments. Commercial rents are low, and residential rents are low to moderate. About 29% of the commercial space and half the single rooms are unoccupied (See section III, Parcel 13 Statistical Summary, pp. 31- 36 ). The Boston Redevelopment Authority owns a forty-car parking lot, two vacant buildings, and will acquire a third building in June, 1975. Although the appearance of the block is inelegant, many buildings appear to be structurally sound.

Parcel 13 is conspicuously located on a major intersection close to the Prudential Center and not far from the prime residential and commercial area of the Back Bay. It is near the north boundary of the Fenway Urban Renewal Project Area, which was established in 1965 by the Boston Redevelopment Authority in cooperation with the Christian Science Church. The original plan for the block called for total demolition of the existing buildings and construction of high-rise luxury apartments. Robert LaCentra, the owner-builder of Back Bay Towers at the Whitney Street redevelopment project about a mile west of the Fenway near Mission Hill received tentative designation as Parcel redeveloper. In January of this year, he submitted floor plans and elevations for 'Boylston Towers' to the BRA and to the Fenway Project Area Committee, a group







representing various local interests, which rejected his proposal and called for revision of the published guidelines for redevelopment. Task forces and study groups were formed by both the BRA and the Project Area Committee to consider various options both for new construction and rehabilitation.

My purpose is to produce a report which might be of use in devising a plan satisfactory to all parties with a legitimate interest in the future of the block. Since the task of information-gathering affords opportunities for spreading recent information and for encouraging communication and interaction among interested persons and groups, the research process is at least as important as the report itself.

The paper is divided into four sections and addresses three questions: (Part One) -- What is the appearance, use, and condition of the block? Who lives and who does business there? What activities take place which are visible to the pedestrian? (Part Two) -- What is the physical and demographic nature of the neighborhood surrounding Parcel 13? What local groups are active and what purposes do they serve? (Part Three) -- What are the provisions of the Fenway Urban Renewal Plan? What is the nature and the history of the controversy over the plan in general and of Parcel 13 in particular? How has the controversy affected relationships between organized local residents? (Part Four) -- What is the history of planning decisions on Parcel 13? What features might a suitable plan comprise and how can it be implemented and financed? What are the obstacles which have so far prevented any action?

# Part One -- Parcel 13 Now

"Parcel 13 is filthy and ugly. Boylston Street, especially, is a visual chaos. Most of all, it's wasteful; I hate to see buildings going to waste."

-- a FenPAC representative

"Parcel 13 is quite all right as it is. There are good apartments, and I like the variety of small stores. If you stand back and take a good look, the buildings are very attractive. All it needs is a little fixing up."

-- a Parcel 13 Committee member

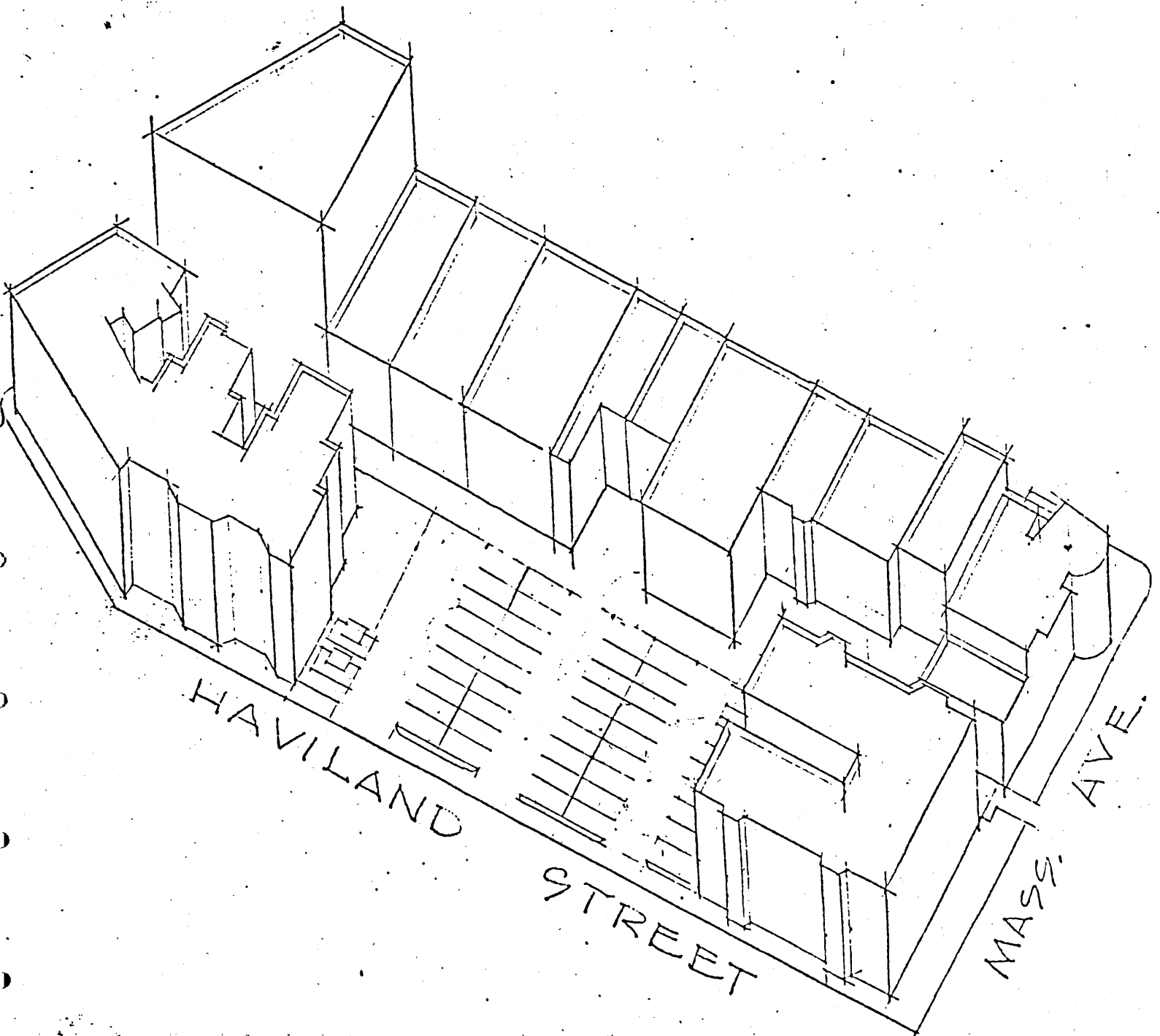
## I. A Tour of the Block<sup>1</sup>. (May, 1975)

On the corner of Haviland Street and Massachusetts Avenue stands a grimy four-story building with ground-floor businesses and apartments above. The store fronts and signs, continually remodelled over the years, compete for the attention of the passers-by; at street level one would hardly notice that all four were in the same building. The upper floors are of yellow brick with plain red brick on the alleys, where demolition has long exposed what was to have been concealed. There are both angular and curvaceous bay windows of dented metal, trimmed with panels and garlands. Just below the heavy cornice is a row of brick arches, which complement the arched windows of the top floor.

The building, which dates from 1894, has been the property of Mark and Lester Werman for over 20 years. In 1970 the assessed value jumped from \$110,000 to \$146,000. For many years the chief tenant was a Hayes-Bickford's cafeteria. The apartments are overheated by steam, and the electric wiring may be said to be impromptu. Although decorating is left entirely to the tenants, major repairs and emergencies are attended to.

On Haviland Street the doorway to T.C.'s Lounge is set in a long, windowless brick wall. Compensating for the lack of visibility are a protruding electric sign and a glossy red-and-white paint job. The interior has two sections. The first, with bar and tables, is dark and soothing; up a few

## PARCEL 13





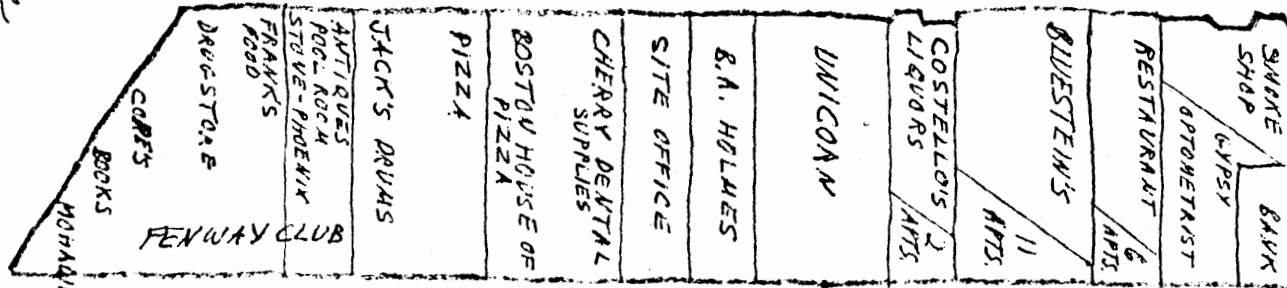
BOYLSTON

STREET

MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

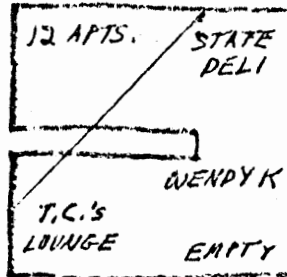
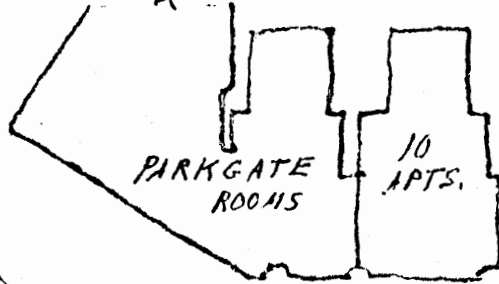
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HENNINGWAY ST.

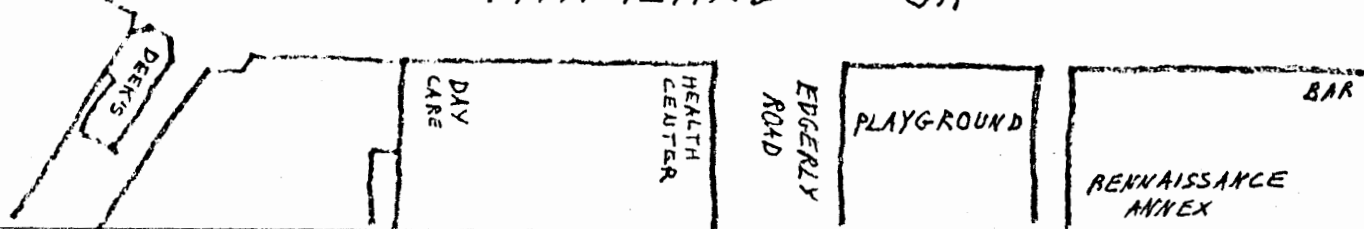


PARCEL 13

PARKING



HAVILAND ST.



stairs is a brighter area with bumper pool, more tables, and a fireplace whose purpose is only decorative. Old pictures of movie stars, boxers, race horses, and similar memorabilia adorn the walls and ceilings.

T. C. stands for Tony Consalvi, who recently took over the business from his father. They have been at this location for four years and employ five people. Rent is .15 a square foot, or \$375 a month. The father once owned Crusher Casey's bar on Massachusetts Avenue, then moved to Roxbury Crossing and to Tremont Street in the South End. In each case the move was due to urban renewal. Each time it became harder and harder to find a suitable location and reestablish his trade. There are three other barrooms only a few steps from his.

T.C.'s is open from 8 A.M. to 2 A.M. His customers are mostly men over thirty, but lately, since he started offering a variety of submarine sandwiches for .75, young utility and construction workers have been coming in for lunch. The pool table is also an attraction. Consalvi's strategy is to offer a well-made drink at a good price and to rely on word-of-mouth advertising to keep sales volume up. But, as he says, business depends on the state of the economy. When people have a paycheck, they drink; when they don't, they can't.

"I gave up a lot to take over the business. I was a meat cutter. I'd say the location is about average. Business is nothing fantastic, a living. We had to put in the bar; the place was a lounge before we came in. I wish I could break through into the store on the corner, but that would take money."

If he did, he would have a good-sized corner window.

Like all the business people on the block, Consalvi complains about building deterioration, garbage, and inadequate police protection. He deplores the hookers, the drunks, and the muggings and hold-ups, which are forcing stores to close earlier at night. The area has "gone to pot" the

past few years; he's glad he's not around at night.

Across Haviland Street is The Renaissance Annex, another version of the Wermans' building with matching materials and a corner barroom. Across Massachusetts Avenue opposite Parcel 13 is a red brick former hotel, now the Berklee School of Music dormitory. Beside it, a vast movie theater is being converted to a Berklee concert hall. At the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street the square, neo-classical State Street Bank squats underneath an enormous billboard, caty-cornered to catch every possible eye.

The rest of the stores in the Werman building face Massachusetts Avenue. The Modern Books was, until a few weeks ago, a pornographic corner book store, but according to an employee, business was poor, and the store closed down. Next is an entrance to the apartments upstairs, its brownstone stoop well used as a bus shelter and alcoholic refuge, and then the small but prosperous Wendy K, selling discount drugs and toiletries. Between this store and the State Deli is another apartment entrance, which was relocated long ago to make way for the restaurant.

The people at the State Deli are the third contingent in as many years to try to make a go of this restaurant since Hayes-Bickford's closed. Rent is \$1200 a month, or .30 a square foot, and there are eleven employees. Hours are from 6 A.M. to 10 P.M. The menu is comprehensive, with Italian dishes featured at suppertime. Seating capacity is about eighty, and both booths and stools are arranged around four service bays, two of which are never used. There are countertop juke boxes with individual speakers, telephones, a take-out section, and a pay toilet. The restaurant is clean, and service is friendly and efficient. Walls are covered with mosaic tile, plywood panelling, murals, and several different shades of flocked wallpaper. Seldom does one see more than twenty customers, and the owner of the building



fears that this operation will fail like the others.

Upstairs are twelve six-room apartments with high ceilings, panelled and fluted woodwork, fancy moldings, and elaborate mirrored fireplaces trimmed with columns, garlands, and tiles. Halls and stairs are grim with cream paint, dark oak, and dirty, loose, white marble slabs. In some apartments young and energetic tenants have painted, refinished, and decorated. Five of the block's eight children live here. Rent is about \$180, and in two of the apartments long-term tenants eke out their income by subletting several rooms.

Mark Werman believes his building will be demolished eventually and complains of falling returns. He can't spend much money on the buildings, and, he says, because of rent control, he can't raise residential rents and hasn't tried. His tenants would reply that, fortunately, the apartments would not bear inspection and would be well satisfied with the situation were it not for the threat of removal. Some of the apartments have dark rooms, and some tenants wish there was less noise on the corner, but the space, the materials, and the price are commended. Move-outs are few, and tenants are quickly replaced. Some residents wish the building could be repaired, but fear that total rehabilitation would raise rents and destroy the character of the interiors.

"I must have one of the biggest bathtubs in Boston. Of course, it may go through the floor. They'd rip out that big sink and put in a new one that's not as good."

Possibly the most obnoxious problem on Parcel 13 is the alley which bisects the block at this point. Because it is very narrow, as much trash gets run over and spilt as collected. Over the years people have complained to city agencies, but no permanent arrangements result. Another problem is caused by deliveries to garages facing the alley. According to Building Department records, fire escape damage from trucks has been the most fre-

quently cited violation for the past fifty years.

Of all the buildings on the block, the highly visible property of Frederick J. Mahoney is the most intricate and most eccentric in appearance and usage. There are two buildings, 1068 and 1070 Boylston Street, and a two-story extension at 135 Massachusetts Avenue. Directly on the corner is a three-story building dating from 1885. The first floor is entirely taken up by a store, five entrances, and a surfeit of signs of all descriptions. Above are two stories of red brick with brownstone trim, several varied groupings of windows, three different gables, a fancy chimney, and a turret with a cone-shaped slate roof. Behind this building is the extension -- the ground floor faced with white stone, the second story painted flat black all over, including three otherwise attractive display windows. The corner building and the extension together has been assessed since 1965 for \$89,500, down from the 1953-1959 high of \$120,000. Next door at 1070 Boylston Street, is a four-story concrete-faced building about ten feet taller than its neighbor. The ground floor is taken up by about two-thirds of a restaurant; above are six loft apartments with large windows. This building was reassessed in 1970 from \$23,500 to \$64,000.

In the extension at 135 Massachusetts Avenue is the Suffolk Franklin Savings Bank, a tenant for about twenty years. The bank employs seven people and sells food stamps. Still on Massachusetts Avenue, but in the corner building, is the entrance to the bank and a side entrance to the Boylston Street restaurant. Right on the corner is a tobacco shop, the Bentley Smoker. On the Boylston Street side is the stoop leading to the quarters of the Tea Leaf Reader, who, with her two small children, occupies the second and third floors. The fourth entrance is to an optometrist's office on the second floor and to the janitor's apartment on the third. The landing is piled to

the ceiling with enough found objects to stock a second hand store. Among the articles are clothes, shoes, appliances, dishes, all neatly arranged on shelves, racks, and clotheslines. The cache is not for sale, but for display; it is a collection. The fifth doorway is the main entrance to the restaurant. The concrete building at 1070 Boylston Street, containing most of the restaurant, has no entrance and no stairs to the upper floors. Access to the loft apartments is through a corridor from the second floor of the corner building.

Residential space is sublet to the optometrist, who leases the apartments, collects rents, and pays for maintenance and utilities. The owner leases the stores and the gypsy establishment and, according to one long term tenant, does little or nothing else. Even major repairs are left to tenants; the restaurant people once had to fix the leaking roof. Payment of property taxes is habitually postponed, and in several instances suppliers and contractors have had to initiate suits to secure payment. Of the nine property owners on the block, Mahoney is one of two owners with extensive holdings. In the mid-sixties, he was the developer for Back Bay Towers, a high-rent building next door to Robert La Centra's Back Bay Manor, in the Whitney Street project near Mission Hill. Recently he has completed Mishawum Park, a moderate income project in the Charlestown renewal area, financed by the Chase Manhattan Bank.

The busiest shop on the block is the tiny Bentley Smoker. The proprietor, Mr. Mohyde, estimates that forty percent of his trade comes from commuters and visitors to the area and the rest from local residents. He would like to remodel his windows and install new fixtures, but uncertainty about eventual relocation has prevented this investment. Since the neighborhood is dangerous, he would probably go to the suburbs if forced to move. The store used

to be open till eleven but now closes at nine.

Mr. Mohyde sells cigarettes, cigars, tobacco, regular pipes, water pipes, newspapers, magazines, paperbacks, racing forms, lottery tickets, and a great variety of sundries. His rent is .40 a square foot, or \$200 a month, and there are four employees. His profit comes first from tobacco and second from newspapers and magazines. These are high volume items; there is a higher mark-up on the slower moving sundries. He complains of being an unpaid tax collector and of increasing restrictions on parking. Despite these difficulties, Mr. Mohyde is well satisfied with his high-traffic corner location and admits to prosperity.

"I figure I have a depression-proof business. Even when times are hard, people will still stop in and get the paper and cigarettes. And if business should slack off, I could lay off a couple of people and spend more time here myself."

The restaurant, for many years the Waldorf Cafeteria and lately called the Burger 'n Egg, reopened in March after having been closed for several months. The place is a favorite hang-out for elderly residents, who sit for hours over a cup of coffee, or over nothing, and chat or read the paper. The cafeteria arrangement encourages people to linger somewhat longer than they would at the State Deli, which is the main competitor along with two sub and pizza places a few doors away. Few changes were made by the new owner, and the interior is a bit shabby. There are varnished wood walls, wallpapered walls, and tomato red and blue walls. At the side entrance, a new paint job is underway, featuring stripes and checks.

Peter, the owner, is doing everything he can to attract younger and more affluent customers. He offers a varied menu at competitive prices. He also offers a ten percent student discount. He has installed a large, loud, pink and purple juke box and plays it himself. He has string flags out over the sidewalk, triangular vinyl flags of the used car lot variety, which whip in

the wind. Paper signs advertising specialties of the house proliferate on the windows. There are six employees, and hours are from 5:30 A.M. to 10 P.M. Peter gets up at four. He must be there the whole time, behind the counter or resting at a table. He complains of the arduous nature of his days.<sup>2</sup>.

At the corner are three well-used phone booths and a cab stand. The intersection of Boylston Street and Massachusetts Avenue is one of the busiest in Boston. Pedestrians must hustle across since there is always traffic turning from one direction or another. Just up Massachusetts Avenue, past a steeply sloping vacant lot, is a street level bridge spanning the turnpike and a bus shelter and subway entrance much favored by alcoholics. Because of turnpike demolition, there is a great empty gap along Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street, which separates the Fenway from the Back Bay.

Boylston Street between Massachusetts Avenue and Hemenway Street was first build upon in 1885 and comprised a row of seventeen three-story bow front single-family houses, the first floor elevated about five feet above the street. At either end was a more elaborate version of these houses. Around the turn of the century, many of the first floors were lowered to sidewalk level and converted to shops. Between 1912 and 1920 almost all of the original houses were replaced by larger concrete and brick buildings, mostly for commercial use. Three of the older buildings remain, but one of these has been so extensively remodelled as to be unrecognizable.

The next building along Boylston Street was built in 1920 of brick with a concrete facing. Like most of the newer buildings on the block, the foundation is of concrete on piles. Each of the upper floors has three large windows forming an attractive facade, which is disfigured by a rusty fire escape. Bluestein's, an office equipment store with five employees, takes up

the first floor. Some years ago there was a post office in the store, and local customers came in for greeting cards and stationary. Now the business is area-wide, filling orders for offices, and there is little off-street patronage. The building is owned either by Phyllis Norman, according to the Registry of Deeds, or by the Maurice Gordon estate, according to the resident caretaker. It was assessed for \$45,000 in 1969.

Upstairs are eleven large, well-lit studio apartments with high ceilings. Rents are about \$125, and there are three vacancies. The caretaker, a Boston Conservatory student, is discouraged by the lack of attention the building receives. His job is to clean and to take out the garbage and to call the management for repairs. But no cleaning supplies have been furnished, and when someone smashed the glass in the outer door, many calls from tenants were required to get it fixed. He called City Hall to get the fire escape attended to but was discouraged by the rigamarole and gave up. As he puts it, "You have to be a goddamned lawyer to even exist around here." He likes the convenience and price of his location but deplores violent crime and the shabby condition of the block. If he could afford it, he would live on Beacon Hill or in Brighton.

Next door is one of the original red brick houses with a cone-capped turret. The building is in excellent condition with pointed bricks and painted trim both front and back. Upstairs are two apartments rented to long-term tenants. The ground floor is Costello's Liquors, a tidy store with bottles in the windows and a metallic front. In the middle of the sidewalk is a large pole sign, which only the dogs seem to appreciate.

The building has been owned by Edward Costello since 1948 and is assessed for \$29,000. Recently Mr. Costello retired and sold the liquor business to a new owner. According to his son, he would like to sell the building as

well, believing that with rent control, it doesn't make sense to own a building unless it is for one's own use. But the BRA is the only likely buyer. He also thinks that the vacancies in BRA-owned buildings have caused a decline in pedestrian traffic and a consequent drop in sales.

Next is a three-story concrete-faced building, formerly the Unicorn coffee house, and vacant for the past six years. It has been owned by the BRA ever since the Unicorn owners went out of business after a protracted struggle to get a theater permit. The ground-floor front is a windowless wooden wall which has been an eyesore for years, and in back are many broken and boarded-up windows. Lately, in response to complaints, the front was painted bright blue, and many old signs and posters were removed. The building dates from 1919 and was at various times the China Rose Restaurant, the Northeast School of Broadcasting, and the Red Lion Grille.

Next door to the Unicorn is the B. A. Holmes Furniture Company. The building dates from 1885 and assumed its present form by 1917. Both the store and the building are owned by Mr. Orenstein, whose daughter, Sue Fayner, manages the business. There are five employees, and the assessed valuation is \$33,000. The second story is completely covered by an enormous, malfunctioning neon sign. Just beneath this is a large new wooden sign with black lettering and a sketch of a townhouse on a white background. On the third floor, both in front and in back, the brick work is coming apart. Recently the carpet inside the store was damaged because of a major roof leak. The roof was repaired, and new carpet has been ordered.

A sign in the window offers furniture for rent or sale at the lowest prices in town -- money back if the customer finds a lower price elsewhere. Displayed in the window is furniture commonly found in more fashionable neighborhoods, such as denim sofas, bentwood and canvas chairs, and curva-

ceous chrome lamps. Toward the rear are conventional stuffed sofas and chairs and vinyl and plastic dinette sets. Mrs. Fayner is gradually replacing what she calls the junk with furniture of higher quality. She believes that the junk might move faster in this area, but she is embarrassed to sell it. The store is doing well enough; expenses are reasonable since they own the building outright.

Like most of the business people on the block, Mrs. Fayner deplores deteriorating conditions caused by uncertainty and wishes she knew whether she will be moving or staying. She would prefer to stay and fix her building and perhaps expand into the Unicorn next door. But she would not mind moving to a student area in Brighton where, she expects, increased sales volume would more than cover added operating costs. Problems arise from parking restrictions, customers absconding with rented furniture, and intruding alcoholics. Mrs. Fayner has many competitors. There are three major furniture leasing companies in the city and many used furniture stores. For cheap new furniture there are stores in less obscure locations, and customers for better furniture are apt to go to Newbury Street or Harvard Square. She places ads, with minimal effect, in local papers and intends to try advertising on the radio.

" The site office is a good building. They could use it for something. For years that used to be McNiff's, you know."

-- a nearby resident, retired

" I hate the site office. That's one building I wouldn't care if they ripped down, it's so ugly. It looks like a jail."

-- a Fenway Area Tenants' Union member

Next to Holmes' is another BRA-owned building, once the site office for the Fenway renewal area. In the early years of the Fenway Plan, the office had a large public relations staff; more recently its functions were reduced to relocation and property maintenance. The building is now vacant. For



thirty years it was the home of McNiff's Crimson Grille, and in the forties customers could dance on the second floor. Ten years ago the concrete facing fell off, and the top floors were remodelled with red brick and small-paned windows. At ground level are a door with one tiny pane of glass and small, barred windows with venetian blinds set high in a wall of plastic facing. Two large jagged holes in the covering expose the concrete underneath. Recently the ground floor was painted bright blue to match the Unicorn. The paint job conceals a splash of red paint thrown by an irate citizen, but the gaping holes remain.

Next is a well-kept and attractive building of three stories, dating from 1912, with a grey store front and large windows with iron railings. Over the years it has housed laboratories, a pottery factory, a catering firm with a dining hall, and a basement laundry. The sidewalk is made of glass brick to illuminate the basement, which extends about twenty feet beneath it. At ground level is a freshly painted recessed entrance to the upper floors with a store on either side. To the left are the dimly-lit premises of the Arthur Cherry Dental Supply Company, with some dusty equipment displayed in the window. On the right is the Boston House of Pizza, which opened last fall after extensively remodelling a vacant cobbler shop. Beneath the window is a veneer of imitation brick; above is a protruding red and white electric sign with a wide border of flashing chrome yellow light bulbs. Upstairs is the Tatiana Babushkina School of Ballet, the Boston Flute Lab, and Design Unlimited, a floral display company. Monthly rents range from .05 to .32 a square foot with about half a floor of vacant space. Paul Lubell, a Back Bay furrier, has owned the building since 1951. It is currently assessed at \$66,000.

"I put more money into it than I get out of it; it's money down the drain. I liked owning the building when I first bought it,

but owning in the city is a bad deal. It's degenerating; it harbors misfits and winos. To put it emphatically, pigs live in cities. The BRA has created a desert in certain areas. I suppose they ought to tear the whole thing down. Still you hate to see your own building go; it becomes a kind of monument to one's self. But I'd get out if the price was right. Either that, or commit myself to McLean (a suburban mental hospital)."

Next door is a shabby, three-story, red brick building with dark dirty windows and dented gutters. In the back there are broken window panes and cracked cement. It dates from 1914 and is assessed for \$50,000. Jacob Furman has owned the property for over twenty years.

"I've asked the BRA in writing to take it. I want to get rid of it; I'm in no mood to fight them. The BRA has spoiled the place enough so any price will probably seem reasonable. I'm losing tenants and losing money. They upped my assessment \$10,000; that makes it easier to take the property. All in all it's been a sad experience."

The Karate school on the third floor moved out a few weeks ago. The second floor tenant is Sam Perkins Veterinary Supplies, with six employees. On the street floor, right next to the Boston House of Pizza is another sub and pizza shop of six years duration. The exterior trim, including a scalloped wooden canopy, is painted bright yellow with red lettering. Inside, since fresh-squeezed orange juice is a specialty of the house, the walls are papered with oranges photographed in full color. One window is piled with real oranges; the other is stacked with red cans of chili, giant-size.

The other store is Jack's Drum Shop, with posters and notices in the windows and another pole sign in the middle of the sidewalk. The inside is gloomy and in need of paint. The floor, covered with pieces of threadbare carpet, is caving in behind the counter, the balcony is rickety, and, about fifteen feet up the wall, an enormous steam radiator struggles ineffectively against the cold.

The store manager wears a fur overshirt and drums his sticks on the counter while he talks. He explains that Jack's did a good business in Park

Square for many years. Three years ago it moved to Boylston Street, and the former owner turned the business over to his son-in-law, who takes little interest in it. The manager complains that salaries are small, business is slow, and the owner is just waiting for the BRA. The location near the music schools is good, but better management and more investment stock would be needed. He thinks that Wurlitzer, a more enterprising competitor with an obscure store on the Newbury Street side of the MBTA station, would do well at this more visible location.<sup>3</sup>.

" But some of these activists should go into the buildings and see what they're really like. The cellar here is collapsing into the sub-cellar. There's a hole about twelve by six down there. The landlord just laid a few boards over it. We're having a dispute with him. We're behind in the rent."

The tallest building on the block is the Fenway Club on the corner of Hemenway and Boylston Streets. A six-story building with a three-story extension was erected in 1914, and in 1927 two roof-top studios were added. Most of the brickwork is ivory with a few inlaid designs in beige and blue. The BRA recently acquired the property as a gift, for tax purposes, from the estate of the late Mr. Leeder, a partner of the real estate firm of Gorin and Leeder.

In 1922 the building was known as the Fenway Business Girls' Club, with 100 occupants. Eventually it became the Fenway Club for Women. There are now 35 women on the three upper floors, almost all elderly tenants of many years duration. Many rooms are unoccupied because of water damage from a once-leaking roof. There are communal kitchens and bathrooms, dim hallways, worn linoleum, dark oak woodwork, and tropical heat by steam.

Victoria Dydek sits in the kitchen eating a lunch of tea and cookies while commending the virtues of her building and the convenience of its location. She is 79 and has lived at the Club for 28 years. She pays \$22 a week for a

small, cluttered, sixth floor room with a south window and a door to a fire escape.

"We have sprinklers here and auxiliary power for the elevator. What do we need with these high-rise buildings? Our elevator worked all during the blackout, but they stopped going at the Prudential. I've written to the Mayor and the city councillors. Here I am close to my doctors and to church. I can do my shopping and get in town. God help us all at the Club!

"I'm an old maid and proud of it. I earned all my own money, and I've travelled to Europe and Mexico with my sister. I really can't understand people who don't care for scenery. Unlike some people around here, I'm not a lonesome type of person. I have my interests, and I'm not afraid to go out. I go to the Never-too-Late group at the library and to the travelogues. Sometimes I go to movies and concerts at a discount. I take a train or a bus, and if I get tired, I take a cab home. But lately there are more bad people around, so I don't go out at night unless someone gives me a ride home. I used to like the Fens, but I don't go there anymore. Instead I sit at the bus stop or on the stairs on Hemenway Street."

Commerical rents at the Fenway Club range from .08 to \$1 per square foot monthly. In general, tenants renting large spaces get the best rates. Up on the seventh floor are the Setti studios, makers of stained glass church windows. A firm of certified public accountants, a recording studio, and a graphic design company are second and third floor tenants. The first floor on Boylston Street contains Kay-Bee Antiques, which moved to its present site twelve years ago when the turnpike was built.<sup>4</sup> Next is the blue canopy of the Stone-Phoenix, a one-time coffee house in the sub-basement now used for dancing twice a week and for occasional practice sessions. In the basement above the Stone-Phoenix is Tony's Pool Room. Bulletin boards up at the street entrance announce the cellar attractions.

Tony Dance lives on Parker Hill. He leaves home at 6:45 in the morning, works all day for a garment manufacturer, and opens the pool room at 4:30. It is midnight before he gets home. Snapshots of his two small girls, "the queen and the princess," adorn the cash register. There are seven slate-

topped, carved mahogany pool tables of massive proportions, probably about seventy years old. There are ornate light fixtures and a dozen or so adult high chairs with footrests, for comfortable observation. Mr. Dance spent \$500 restoring the tables. He has made a few repairs, but can do nothing about the leaking sidewalk. About half the customers are under thirty. Some are local residents and students; others hear about the place from friends or from notices posted by regulars. Deposits are required from strangers.

"Poolrooms are fading out; there's hardly any places left for them. Nowadays pool tables only pay off if they're in a bowling alley. Even if all seven tables were going at once, at \$2.10 an hour I'd just make \$14. So you need cheap rent. I'd say I take in around \$150 a week here. Business would be better if I had a street floor location. And the area is getting rough; I'd be trapped down here if there was any trouble. My competition is the Game Room. That's a good location, across from Northeastern.

"These are very fine tables. Unfortunately I just rent them; they go with the building. I wish I could buy them, but the price would have to be right. I'd hate for the BRA to know how much they're worth. My dream is to have a pool room and a restaurant combined. I'd have wooden walls to go with the tables, and I'd take those light fixtures. Liquor would be all right if you had the right kind of crowd, but in this state they don't allow alcohol in pool rooms. You'd have to have totally separate premises. Kenmore Square would be an ideal location for me, but that would be expensive."

Frank's Food Shop is a dark, narrow lunch counter with a dispirited appearance. An A-frame blackboard on the sidewalk announces the bill of fare.<sup>5</sup> On the corner is the prosperous and hospitable Back Bay Pharmacy, which was displaced twenty years ago from La Centra's development parcel on Mission Hill. The store is long and narrow, with a white tile floor, lunch counter, and several tables. Medicaid prescriptions are welcome, poverty-stricken and elderly patrons receive discounts, and delivery is free. The proprietor is Mike Silver.

"I like this kind of neighborhood. ... We have elderly, families, and students. I really enjoy the students. They make it seem lively. ... I think the area has a very easy-going sort of

atmosphere... I've enjoyed this store more than any I've worked in.<sup>6</sup>

"It takes long, hard work to reestablish your business after a move. Lately business has really picked up -- the prescriptions, that is; I don't make anything much on the food. If I had to, I could probably afford a store in a new building if it was small enough. But then I'd have to give up the food, let the help go, and stick to the prescriptions. So naturally I hope to stay here; I'd hate to see all this go.

"If Frank's closed down, I'd like to open up a real delicatessen in there with lots of different kinds of cheese. It would be both a restaurant and grocery. I bet a place like that would do very well."

There are three more stores on the Hemenway Street side of the Fenway Club. The Bumblebee Bookstore sells used books, mostly about music and the performing arts. The Mohawk Cabinet Shop, the only black-owned business on the block, makes furniture to order. Cope's Hope is a tiny triangular florist shop with a freshly painted white exterior and an array of plants from floor to ceiling. A few paintings, on consignment from Deek's Antiques around the corner, are scattered among the foliage. The store is a one-man operation and opened about six months ago. Gordon Copeland stays open till 9 P.M., watching a tiny television set to pass away the hours. To use the toilet, he must close up for a few minutes and go to his apartment down the street.

"I put in a twelve hour day here, besides going twice a week to the flower market. Sundays I come in for a while to clean up and rearrange things. So far business has been slow. About all the money I make has been spent for stock and shelves and on the compressor and fan for the flower cooler. I had a pay phone installed instead of a regular phone and saved some money that way. Sometimes it's hard to anticipate what people will want. One week the African violets will sell in two days while the geraniums sit there. The next week it's just the opposite. People buy the cut flowers on Friday and Saturday nights. This place is too small to do wedding displays like Symphony-in-Flowers. I took a look at the new shop in Church Park. I must say I didn't care for it; they've put huge bows on the plants. I can't be an FTD florist because it's expensive to be entered in their catalogue. Still I'm pleased with the store and with its location. There's lots of people walking by, and it's visible from Boylston Street as well. More people are coming in lately, so I'm hopeful."

There are many complaints about the Boylston Street sidewalk, which is cracked and patched and slopes steeply to the curb. For much of its length, there is a treacherous step in the middle, which marks the front of the cellar extensions. There are weeds in the summer and ice in the winter. At the corner the character of the street changes abruptly. On the south side of Boylston Street, just across Hemenway Street, is the Berklee classroom building, a former residential hotel in the classical manner. Between Berklee and the Fens is the imposing and well-kept Massachusetts Historical Society. On the north side of Boylston Street is St. Clement's student parish, a grey stone church with attractive grounds, and several yellow brick apartment houses with lanterns and glass doors trimmed with ornate ironwork. There are curbside trees and flower gardens behind clipped hedges. At the end of the street the statue of John Boyle O'Reilly marks the beginning of the Fens.

Back on Hemenway Street, and across the alley from the Fenway Club, is a curvaceous four-story block of painted grey brick buildings dating from 1894, which round the corner into Haviland Street. The first building, which once contained sixteen large apartments, is now the Parkgate rooming house, owned by Philip Portnoy since 1948. It is assessed for \$130,500 (surely the most overvalued building on Parcel 13) and has thirty residents. Many rooms are in too poor shape to rent. The entrance at 12 Hemenway Street has a fieldstone staircase, a jalousied doorway, and a sign with silver spangled letters on a black background. There is also a shabby side entrance at 15 Haviland Street.

Florence Provencher moved to the Parkgate from the Fenway Club forty years ago. She has lots of friends in the neighborhood and praises the area for its many conveniences. Once she did most of her shopping locally, but many

stores have closed in recent years. Now friends with cars take her out of town for both shopping and recreation. Miss Provencher knows many people who had to move when the Massachusetts Turnpike went through. She speaks well of her landlord and of her building.

"I like this section. I'm so used to it; it's home. I'm contented just to have a place to live. I couldn't afford to live in a high rise, and neither could anyone else in my block."

Another tenant at the Parkgate declares that even if he could afford it, he would never want to live in Church Park.

"I don't care for those places at all. That kind of building isn't homey."

There are six three-bedroom and four one-bedroom apartments at 13 Haviland Street, a clean, well-maintained building with fireplaces and oak woodwork. Charles Alex is the owner, and the current assessment is \$50,000.

"I'd like to keep my building and fix it up, but with the BRA, there's a sword over my head. I wish they'd do something; the situation causes dilapidation. People don't care anymore. I make \$25,000 or \$30,000 a year in net income and pay \$10,000 in taxes. When my assessment went up, I couldn't go crying poor mouth; if I did, they'd say it wasn't worth anything when the time comes to take it. So we're caught in a trap not of our own making. I charge \$250 for the three bedroom apartments which is a little high for ordinary working families. There's only a couple of families there now, but three or four young people can usually afford it."

One of Alex's tenants is a young accountant with two roommates. He heard about the apartment eight months ago from friends who were moving out.

"Aside from the fact that my apartment is dark, I like the building. It's large and solid, and complaints are satisfied promptly. I consider the immediate neighborhood to be a decaying, borderline area. As it is, it's underused; my building is probably not worth the site potential.

"I'd prefer the Back Bay or the Waterfront if I could afford it, but I don't expect I ever will. I like the area for its location and for the comfortable mixture of people; it's a melting pot. I don't mind musicians practicing, but I don't like noisy students, the winos, and the prostitutes. In general I'd say I have a neutral feeling; there's not too much tension and I don't feel too defensive."



A young couple with a small boy have lived at 13 Haviland Street for two and a half years. The woman works part-time at the day care center across the street.

"The best thing about this area is the big apartments for the price. And it's accessible to everything -- stores, downtown Boston ... It seems like there's a community here. A feeling of togetherness. New York was never like that.

" ... Something should be done to the parking lot and alley. It should be cleaned. That's what it gets down to, cleaning."7.

A woman living with her two children and her mother was a former tenant.

"If I could live anywhere it wouldn't be in the city ... I'd live out in Roslindale or that area. ... I always liked it here for the convenience. ... I like the area least for the way it's gotten run down.

" ... This used to be a very nice area when I moved in. I used to pay \$145 a month. Three years ago he got a \$30 raise when that tax business went through, and this year he wanted another \$30. I just refused, and he hasn't done anything about it. He charges the students in the building more, but that's a few people putting their money together. I just couldn't pay any more than I do. Of course now I don't have a lease because I wouldn't sign one for any \$200."8.

For whatever reason, this family is no longer in the neighborhood.

Across Haviland Street are two yellow brick apartment houses and, wedged in between them, a small store called Deek's Antiques. At the corner of Edgerly Road is an Italian classical baroque building of grey stucco. The Fenway Community Health Center and the Burbank Day Care Center occupy the basements. On the opposite corner, beside the Renaissance Annex, is the intensely used Edgerly Road Playground, built by local residents and M.I.T. architecture students as a summer project in 1973. Although the materials are crude and fragile, the playground has never been vandalized.

Finally, there is Rock's parking lot, created by the 1955 demolition of four buildings which matched the Parkgate and 13 Haviland Street. It is depressed about ten feet below the sidewalk, holds forty cars, and serves in

off hours as surplus recreation space. The lot is screened somewhat by ailanthus and a couple of white birch trees which grow precariously from the top of the embankment. It is operated by Mr. Garcia, who lives with his wife and three children in a nearby building for which he is the superintendent.

"A lot this size doesn't bring in much money. It's \$2.00 a day, and the monthly rate is \$25. Most of the customers are students and people who work around here. Some people pull in for shopping. And we get some cars when there's a ball game even though it's so far from Fenway Park. There's also some parking for events at Hynes Auditorium. There's a lot of opportunity for parking around here. Before they built the Church Park apartments, the lot behind Symphony Hall was always jammed.

"I've lived here thirty years. The only thing I mind about this block are the empty buildings like the Unicorn and the garbage, which attracts rats. But the area changes at night. I think the hookers attract criminals; it's not the people who live here who cause all the trouble. I see no need to tear the block down, but if they do, I'm not particularly worried about my job. I'll take on another parking lot or, preferably, a garage."

#### Conclusions.

The around-the-block tour reveals both negative and positive aspects of the social and economic functions of Parcel 13. A scrutiny of Building Department records makes it apparent that the intensity and mixture of present-day uses reflects the flux of uses over time; businesses were introduced at the turn of the century, and since that date the variety and changes in types of commercial activity has been especially striking.

Parcel 13 has undoubtedly been damaged by its ten year status as a renewal site, since Parcel users haven't known when or even if demolition and new construction would occur. But even in its present state, the block still seems to be a viable entity, providing services which enrich the economic and social life of the surrounding neighborhood and are utilized by region-wide customers as well. Both its housing and commerce are unique.

Parcel 13 housing seems to be especially suited to low income tenants, who are retired people, students, and service employees. Their housing priorities are overwhelmingly for the right amount of space at an affordable rent, and, most important of all, in this particular location, which is sought after because of its proximity to jobs at hospitals, restaurants, hotels, and office buildings, to college classrooms, public transportation, shopping and medical facilities. Compared to location, price and space requirements, the status and comforts to be derived from living in modern, standard, up-to-code shelter is very much a secondary consideration, although some tenants appreciate the low-rise character and architectural details of the buildings. The neighborhood is also important to both elderly long-term residents and to younger and more recent inhabitants for social reasons. Retired residents want to live among friends where they have always lived, and young tenants, especially activists, see the neighborhood as a community of good people who will organize themselves to meet local needs.

Price, size, and location are equally important to many business people on the Parcel. Businesses with unique requirements, such as the ballet school, the stained glass window company, the pool room, and the performing arts bookstore need the space the Parcel provides. As the tide of urban renewal inundates the intown area, the probability of finding a suitable location at a reasonable price elsewhere becomes increasingly unlikely. Some of the more common businesses, such as the barroom and the State Deli, require highly visible locations at modest rents for survival. More prosperous establishments, such as the furniture store, the smoke shop, and the drugstore, could survive a move, but their services

would be lost to the Fenway, or, as in the case of the drugstore, curtailed to fit a smaller space. Three Parcel businesses have previously endured relocation, and many Parcel tenants are acquainted with victimism of various Boston renewal projects.

Another positive aspect of Parcel life is the high morale of many residential and commercial tenants. Most roomers and apartment dwellers are determined to remain where they are as long as possible, and storekeepers have optimistic ideas about remodelling their premises and expanding operations if circumstances were to become favorable. But as things are, opportunities are frustrated and entrepreneurial projects remain pipe dreams.

Most Parcel 13 landlords are small, long-term owners with other interests, whose proclivities to profit maximization are somewhat underdeveloped. This situation, however merciful for tenants, has its negative side in that owners, compared to storekeepers, are less innovative. The mood of several landlords over the years has alternated between disgust and resignation.

The other negative aspects of Parcel 13 are uncertainty, disinvestment, vacancies, and crime. The ten year state of uncertainty over redevelopment plans has prevented the sort of investment in maintenance and repairs which is necessary for reasons of safety and desirable for making the block more attractive. As Parcel 13 deteriorates, and as the city acquires more buildings, vacancies occur which diminish pedestrian traffic and hence the trade of many businesses which remain. Crime also enters this picture; it increases with diminished Parcel use and, in turn, further restricts the free movement of people. Several stores, from fear

of hold-ups, close earlier than they would otherwise and thus contribute to the dangers of Parcel use.

## II. Pedestrians on Parcel 13

### Means of Identification

The most reliable and obvious means for categorizing the pedestrians are age and appearance, but the study of movement and motive is also helpful. Intentions may be gauged by the street being used, the side of the street, the direction taken, and the point of crossing. Another clue is the manner of walking, whether a purposeful stride, or a leisurely stroll, and still another is the time of day. By combining these indications, it is often possible to distinguish students and local residents from commuters, and job-holders from the unemployed.

### Pedestrian Activity

#### Age, race, sex.

A great variety of people of all ages and several races make use of Parcel 13. Since the Berklee school buildings are at either end of the block, young people predominate, and there are many more men than women. There are also many elderly people to be seen; in this group there are also more men, but the majority is not as overwhelming. People in the thirty-to-sixty age bracket rank a poor third, and, except at the playground, there are even fewer children. Almost 30% of the pedestrians are members of minority groups; of these the majority are black, the rest oriental or spanish-speaking. Although there are no minority residents on Parcel 13 itself, they are well represented on nearby streets.<sup>9</sup>

#### Clothing.

Most of the people walking by are inexpensively and conventionally

dressed. Work clothes are popular among young people, but there are also some nine-to-fivers dressed for the office. A woman in her forties wears lime-green polyester pants, a yellow chiffon kerchief, and a shabby beige top coat. For an elderly man, a representative outfit consists of a long, baggy, tweed overcoat, dark green cotton pants of ample cut, a visored cap, black shoes, and white socks. Others favor suits, topcoats, and felt hats. Even on the hottest summer days, a few of the older women wear stockings, gloves, and hats. Some clothes are in good condition, some are threadbare, and run-over heels are common. One elderly woman carefully sews black lace to the cuffs of her winter coat to hide the wear.

Many pedestrians prefer a more exotic style of dress, which may be either expensive or thrifty. One elderly blonde woman wears a tall, white fur hat and a black pant suit with white fur collar and cuffs. A man in his thirties is resplendent in a glen plaid Sherlock Holmes outfit -- an intricately tailored coat and the familiar hat. A young man wears dungarees with a matching waist-length jacket, a long striped scarf of many colors, black high-heeled boots, and a black-broad-brimmed hat. Jeans may be rolled knee-high to display fancy stockings or boots, and platform shoes are popular with both sexes.

Typical days.

Activity starts at about six A.M. with many workers starting off for the early shift. The restaurants are open for breakfast. Gradually those who work more normal hours appear. They converge on Massachusetts Avenue at the bus stops, or turn east on Boylston Street, or cross Boylston Street to the Auditorium station. At about nine the students emerge from their dormitories and apartments and hurry to class. With six restaurants

and a barroom on the block, eating is a major pastime, followed by shopping and window shopping. People stop and chat, sometimes sitting on fenders or stoops. They use the telephone booths, mail letters, and hail cabs. They accumulate a dozen at a time at the crosswalk at Boylston Street and Massachusetts Avenue. At four or so the homeward trek begins; at the bus stop on the corner of Haviland Street there are usually ten or more people of all ages waiting for the Dudley Bus to the South End and Roxbury. At this stop and at the Auditorium stop just before it, white people get off and black people get on in disproportionate numbers. Across the street, on the route to Harvard Square, it is just the opposite.

Evenings and weekends.

On weekday nights sidewalk and store use drops sharply, and although there are a few young women and elderly men, the pedestrians are mostly young and male. Weekends are less busy, especially on Sunday: more older women venture out, and, with no classes scheduled, students are somewhat less in evidence. On Friday and Saturday nights young people come and go in groups and in couples, male and female, male and male.

#### Identifiable Groups

Children.

Besides students, elderly residents, and working people, who between them constitute the majority of pedestrians, there are also a number of children in the playground, which is used by all age groups from toddlers to young adults. A few parents and other habitues provide informal supervision. The playground is most used after school. In the summer the



crowd comes out in the late afternoon as soon as it becomes shady and stays until well after dark. Most school age children are allowed out to play within certain specified distances. Others are hardly ever seen outdoors except with an adult. The gypsy's little children are self-sufficient; their only dealings with other children are to steal from them. They also are said to steal from the stores and are out on the street until late at night.

#### Prostitutes.

The antics of the prostitutes are not what they once were since the closing of the pornographic bookstore. The Modern Books was like a sign on the corner; the 'hookers' had an established place of business and could simply flag down trade from passing cars. Even in cold weather, black satin shorts and high-heeled boots were the accepted costume. Lately, their clothes and behavior are more subdued; they no longer congregate in large groups or stand in one spot for any length of time. The 'johns', however, are almost as obtrusive and optimistic as ever, cruising up and down the streets indefatigably. Although local residents can identify a hooker, the johns apparently cannot; many roll down their windows and do their best whenever a female passes, whether she be a dowager of seventy or a young woman in work boots and overalls.

#### Alcoholics.

The neighborhood's alcoholics are in evidence both day and night. They panhandle on Massachusetts Avenue and gather in small groups and share their bottles. They sit on the stairs at 149 Massachusetts Avenue or at the Renaissance Annex on Haviland Street. Other favorite haunts are the

bus shelter and the tunnel at Auditorium Station. In good weather they sleep undisturbed in thickets at the Fens, sometimes using old cushions or mattresses. At other times they use the laundromat behind the Harvard Club or lie in doorways until someone moves them on. They appear to practice voluntary segregation, sitting as far as possible from ordinary folk. Seldom will they use the playground if anyone else is there. Sometimes they sport immaculate white bandages surrounded by accumulated grime. Once in a while the younger men get a little belligerent, but the major objection to alcoholics seems to be aesthetic. Storekeepers on the block put them out the minute they come in.

#### Amount of Pedestrian Use

The street with the heaviest pedestrian traffic is Massachusetts Avenue. Because it is the route to Back Bay shopping, to public transportation and to other attractions farther down the street, it is used by both local residents and transients. The Wendy K, the restaurant, the bank, and the smoke shop also encourage frequent use. The other three streets serve pedestrians whose destinations are on the block itself or nearby. Of these, Boylston Street ranks first in foot traffic. Although the drugstore and the pizza shops are busy, the other stores are less of a necessity. The vacant buildings and the empty lot across the street probably have a discouraging effect, and the only bus stop is on the lightly-used Queensberry line to the West Fenway.

The construction of the Church Park apartments blocked off two short streets and substituted two walkways through the building. But because these pass-throughs are hard, at some angles, to distinguish from the

entrances and are not aligned with the obstructed streets, they are relatively ineffective as channels to Massachusetts Avenue. Hence Haviland Street gets more pedestrian use than its mainly residential character would suggest. In addition to the apartments, there are T.C.'s Lounge, Deek's Antiques, the parking lot, and the entrances to the health and day care centers. Haviland Street is the shortest distance from the Berklee dormitory to the classroom building and also has a short-cut to Edgerly Road over a plank walk through the playground. Hemenway Street, which leads to the two Conservatories, Northeastern University, and the dormitories at the southern end of the street, is the least travelled street on the block.

#### Noise and Music

On major streets, quiet conversation is often impossible; people must shout to be heard. Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street are truck and bus routes, and cars cruise ~~the side streets~~ looking for a place to park. Once in a while a musical horn sounds proudly forth, and tuneful ice cream trucks make nightly summer visits. Day and night the sounds of music permeate the atmosphere, live and recorded, expert and inexpert, muted or earth-shaking. Sirens from police cars, ambulances, and fire trucks pierce the air, and jack-hammers chew up the streets on what seems to be a regular basis.

### III. Parcel 13 -- Statistical Summary.

#### A. 1975 -- Survey of Residents, Housing Units, and Businesses.<sup>10</sup>

##### Residents

The estimated total population of Parcel 13 is 145. There are 76 men and 69 women. 41.4% are over 60, 5.5% are children, and 9.1% are either full or part time students. Elderly women and young men are the two largest groups. Over half the residents are long-term tenants, and over 60% do not want to move. An even larger percentage have low individual incomes. Over half the working residents are in service occupations. One-fourth are blue collar workers, and subemployment is high.

##### Population Table (126 surveyed)

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>	
	<u>% of total</u>	<u>estimated total</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>estimated total</u>
60+	13.1	19	28.3	41
40-59	9.7	14	7.6	11
30-39	8.3	12	4.1	6
20-29	17.9	26	5.5	8
10-19	0.0	0	0.0	0
0-9	<u>3.4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>4</u>
	52.4%	75	47.6%	70

##### Length of Tenancy (121 surveyed)

	<u>% of total</u>	<u>number surveyed</u>
0 - 2 years	44.6%	54
3 -10 years	38.0%	46
11+ years	<u>17.4%</u>	<u>21</u>
	100.0%	121

Relocation Attitude (126 surveyed)

For	0.0%
Against	60.1%
Indifferent	39.9%

Personal Income (131 surveyed -- student income excluded)

\$ 0 - 4,000	61%
\$ 4,000 - 9,000	30%
\$ 9,000 - 14,000	7.6%
\$14,000 - 20,000	1.4%

Occupation (131 surveyed -- student and elderly workers excluded)

Professional	8.7%
Service	53.6%
Artist/Musician	13.0%
Blue Collar	24.7%

Employment Data (131 surveyed -- students and elderly workers excluded)

Unemployment	11.2%
Part-time Employment	63.3%

Housing Units

There are 103 occupied units and 79 vacancies, almost all single rooms too damaged to rent. All multi-bedroom and almost all one bedroom apartments are occupied.

## Unit Size

	% of total	no. of units	total rooms
Rooms	57.3	59	59
Studios	7.8	8	8
1 Bedroom	16.5	17	51
2 Bedroom	1.9	2	8
3 Bedroom	5.8	6	30
4 Bedroom	<u>10.7</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>66</u>
	100.0%	103	222

Average number of rooms per unit = 2.1 (222 rooms  $\div$  103 units)

	% of total	Rent no. of units	estimated rent/mo.	total rent/mo.
\$ 60 - 99	55.5	57	\$ 80.	\$ 4560.
\$100 - 139	20.0	20	\$120	\$ 2400.
\$140 - 199	20.0	21	\$170	\$ 3570.
\$200 - 259	<u>4.5</u>	<u>5</u>	\$250	<u>\$ 1250.</u>
	100.0%	103		\$11780.

Estimated average monthly rent per unit = \$114 (\$11,780  $\div$  103 units)

## Businesses

Most businesses are long-established and are opposed to construction. Average rents are about one-fourth the commercial rents in newly constructed buildings in the neighborhood.

Number	31
Average square feet	2,097
Average rent	\$ .26/sq. ft./month
Total employees	124
Average number of employees	4
Average length of tenancy	9 years
Relocation attitudes:	

	Number	% of total
For	0	0.00
Against	20	64.5
Indifferent	7	22.6
Unavailable	<u>4</u>	<u>12.9</u>
	31	100.00%

## B. Comparative Data, 1960 - 1970 - 1975

For the years 1960 and 1970, figures are from U. S. Census table 2, 'Characteristics of Housing Units by Blocks.' For 1975 figures were derived from the FenPAC Survey.

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>
	<u>tract J5, block 1</u>	<u>tract 104, block 101</u>	<u>Survey data</u>
Total population	182	185	145
% under 18	unavailable	3%	5.5%
% over 62 (1970)	"	41%	
% over 60 (1975)	"		41.4%
Total housing units	115	150	182
Owner occupied	0	0	0
Renter occupied	110	146	103
Average rent	\$ 61 (70 constant)	\$ 96 (82 constant)	\$114 (77 constant)
Average no. of rooms	2.4	1.8	2.1
Percent occupied by			
non-white (1960)	1.8		
Negro (1970)		1.0	0

A comparison of the above statistics shows an increase in the number of housing units, probably from conversion of office space and large apartments into smaller units. Nonetheless, the amount of the increase from 1960 - 1970 seems impossibly high, considering the space available on the block. Population and the vacancy rate were stable from 1960 to 1970, with a population drop by 1975 because of very high vacancy rate



in deteriorating single rooms. Average rents rose \$35 from 1960 to 1970 and \$18 from 1970 to 1975, but in terms of constant dollars, with 1967 as the base year, rents rose only \$12 from 1960 to 1970 and dropped \$5 from 1970 to 1975. (Constant dollar figures are based on the Boston consumer price index.)

## Part Two -- The Fenway

### I. Description

#### Origins

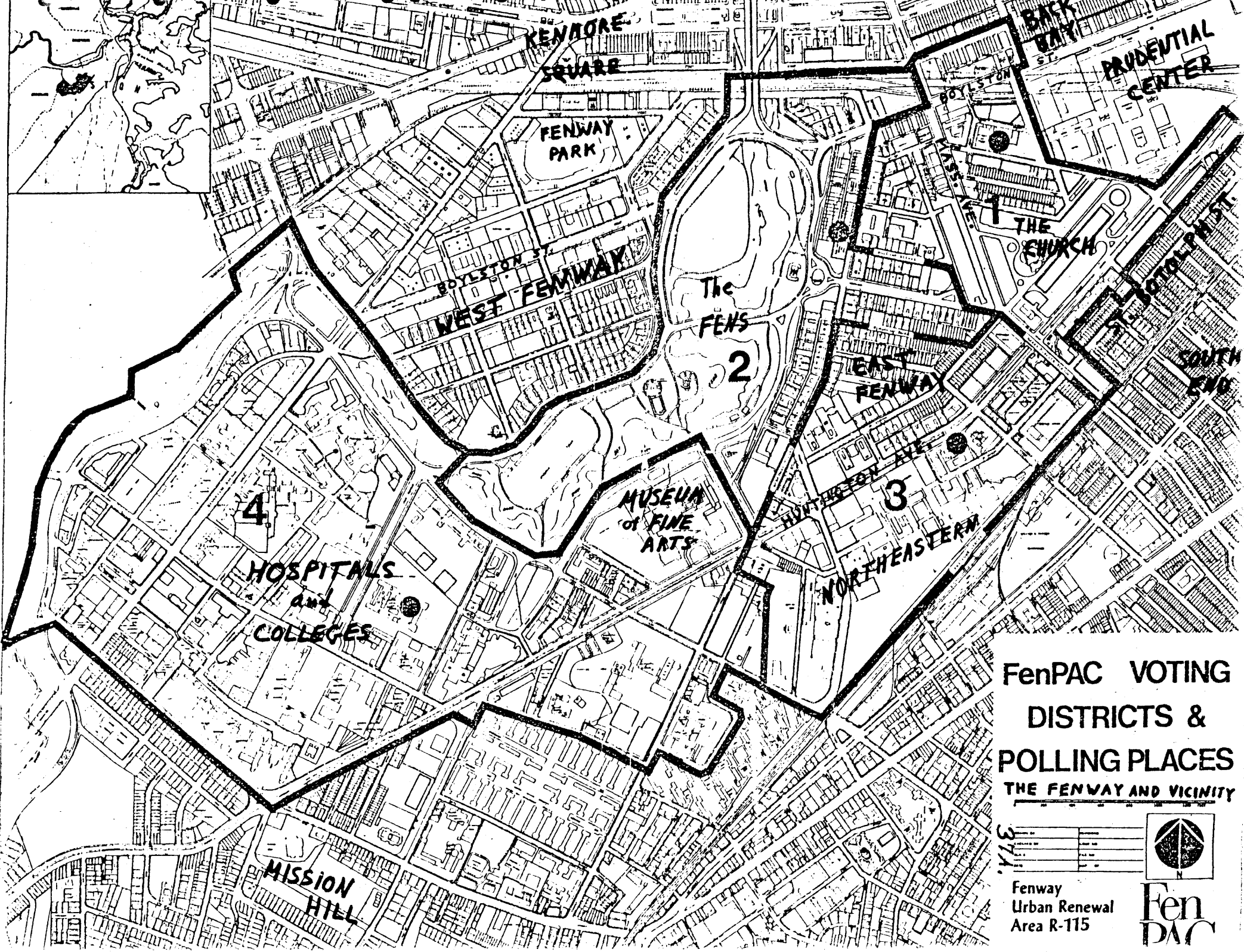
Construction of the Fenway began in the 1880's and was completed before the first World War. Because most of the land was made from filled-in tidal flats and marshes, the buildings, including the institutions, were the first to occupy their sites. On the side streets most of the original residential buildings remain. On the major streets houses made way for commercial buildings in the 'teens and twenties and remained undisturbed until urban renewal demolition and reconstruction began. With the exception of Mechanics' Hall and the old Christian Science publishing house, institutional and public buildings were left in place.

#### Fenway Borders

Man-made barriers and land-use changes define the 'natural' boundaries of the Fenway residential and commercial area. To the east is the Prudential Center, separated from its surroundings by its elevation and mammoth scale. To the south are the railroad tracks, Northeastern University, and an industrial district. A wide belt of museums, colleges, hospitals, and parkways separates the Fenway from Brookline and from the Mission Hill - Parker Hill neighborhood to the west. The Massachusetts Turnpike divides the East Fenway from the Back Bay, and the strip commercial character of the western end of Boylston Street separates the West Fenway from the warehouse district just south of Kenmore Square.

#### Sections of the Fenway

These borders are pierced at different points of the compass by major



**FenPAC VOTING  
DISTRICTS &  
POLLING PLACES  
THE FENWAY AND VICINITY**

375'.

Fenway  
Urban Renewal  
Area R-115

**Fen  
PAC**

streets, which give easy access to surrounding districts and also divide the Fenway into its component parts. The most prominent divisor is the Fens itself and its surrounding, undulating, and traffic-laden roadways, which separates the area into East and West Fenway sections. Since each area has its own shops, there is little reason, apart from community patriotism, for residents of one district to spend much time in the other. District divisions create problems for community organizing and allocation of services. There are separate congressional districts and different state senators and representatives. Although most of the Fenway is in school district one, the streets east of Massachusetts Avenue are in district seven. The Queensberry bus line shuttles at infrequent intervals between the West Fenway and the upper end of Massachusetts Avenue, saving its patrons some effort, if not time.

#### The West Fenway

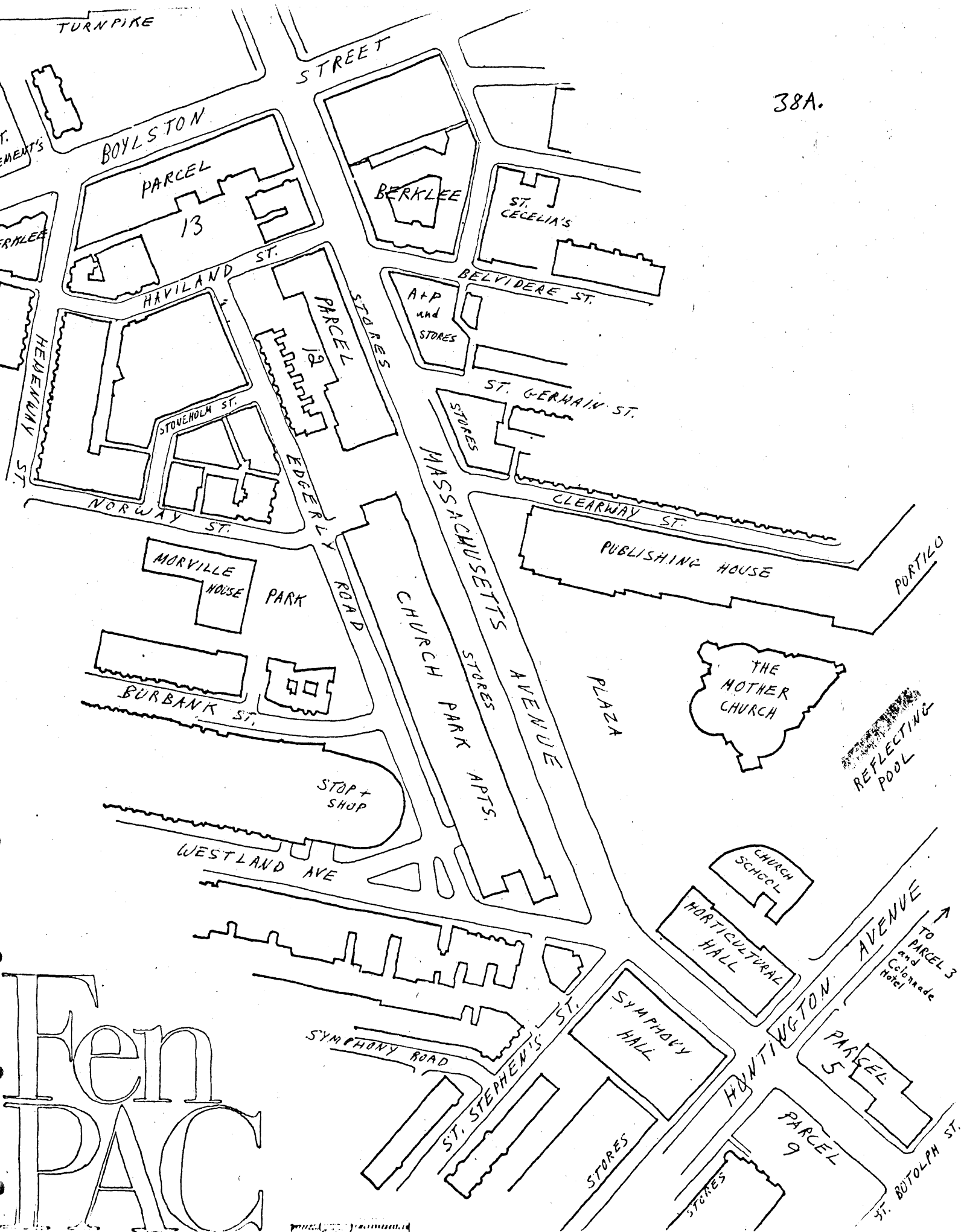
The West Fenway is a leafy area of ornate four and five story apartment houses. Once a neighborhood of manicured respectability, it is still attractive, but run-down. Urns are not planted, yards are weedy, and interiors shabby. Many units are unoccupied because of a long-standing dispute between a real estate firm and tenants over bad financial management, poor conditions, and plans for rehabilitation and rent-raising. The major streets, Peterborough, Queensberry, and Park Drive, are residential; most convenience stores are on the side streets, and there is also an enormous Star Market on Boylston Street.

#### The East Fenway

The East Fenway is a fifteen minute walk across the park. In this

TURNPIKE

38A.



Fenway  
Park

district the residential streets are, for the most part, narrower, denser, and more urban. Although several streets have townhouses, most are lined with small, attached apartment houses with undulating or angular facades. There is red brick and yellow brick in about equal amounts and more grey stone than brownstone. Although details vary, the streets facades are harmonious. Massachusetts Avenue divides the East Fenway into two subsections. 'Seven Streets' lies between Massachusetts Avenue and the park; east of the avenue, adjacent to the Prudential Center, are Clearway, Saint Germain, and Belvidere Streets and the so-called 'core area' of the Christian Science Church.

The third district is Saint Botolph Street, a townhouse area which is separated from the rest of the Fenway by Huntington and Massachusetts Avenues and from the South End by the railroad tracks. Its status was ambiguous for a number of years; geographically it could belong to either renewal area or to none. Lately it has come to be accepted as falling within the limits of the Fenway neighborhood.

#### Commerce

##### Loss of stores

"The majority of the merchants on Massachusetts Avenue are in the age category of 60-65. We feel that at this time it would be impossible for anyone to relocate because it takes a minimum of five years to build up goodwill amongst the people of a new area. What the BRA offers for my business is peanuts in case I don't decide to relocate."

-- A Massachusetts Avenue Board of Trade member

"There's too much retail space being built. You need to attract a more affluent population to make it go. The ordinary small businessman is a thing of the past."

-- a FenPAC member

"You can go in town or down Boylston Street. When you come right down to it, who needs to shop on Mass. Avenue?"

-- a Parcel 13 property owner

In the late fifties, there were stores on both sides of Huntington and Massachusetts Avenues. Now about two-thirds of the stores on Huntington Avenue are gone or are about to go. Some shops were displaced by Prudential Center and turnpike construction, but the major and more recent losses are the result of demolition for the Fenway Urban Renewal Plan. Once disturbed, the fragile relationship of shopper to seller is hard to re-establish the market is at least as large as ever, but response is inadequate or inappropriate. Uncertainty on disposition parcels causes vacancies and disinvestment. New commercial space is too expensive and too large for many businesses. But rents in remodelled buildings are more feasible, and, since its future existence is assured, the Huntington Avenue commercial district, between Symphony Hall and Northeastern, continues to thrive.

#### East Fenway businesses.

"I shop where I like the people. I've gotten friendly with some of the storekeepers. Some of these small stores will give credit if they know you."

-- A Parcel 13 resident

"What I can't stand are these small rip-off chain stores like Store 24. They just take advantage."

-- A Fenway Interagency Group member

"I go to all the stores that are around here, and the ones that used to be. The hardware store and the dime store are gone. This is a terrible shopping area now, since renewal, I have to admit."

-- a Parcel 12 resident<sup>2</sup>.

"The Fenway must be the pizza capitol of Boston."

-- A Parcel 13 storekeeper

"How can there be so many Ugi's (pizzarias) so close together?"  
 -- a Former Parcel 13 resident

In the East Fenway, within a five minute walk of each other, are nine sub and pizza places; four of these are Ugi's. There are eight barrooms, five liquor stores, and six banks. There are a multitude of restaurants and cafeterias, ranging in elegance from Joe and Nemo's to the Amalfi, and variety stores, laundries, cleaners, and barbers. Hardware, records, art and stationary supplies, clothes, and shoes are available. There are two supermarkets, a good fish market, and a 'gourmet' food shop. On the upper floors are a radio school, an art school, dance and music studios, and photographers. The only movie theater is the Symphony Cinema, I and II. One week's offerings were: Enter the Dragon, Chinese Professionals, Boss Nigger, and Johnny Touch.

#### Fenway Institutions

November, 1965;<sup>3.</sup>

"I am mainly concerned about homeowners and renters. These institutions would take houses for shrubbery."

-- A State Representative

"Now I ask you, can this church of American people have a clear conscience to step on the people to beautify itself?"

-- A Parcel 13 businessman

A recent FenPAC study shows that about seventy percent of the building lots in the Fenway are owned by institutions.<sup>4.</sup> (The Fenway, in this instance, is the area within the plan boundaries and the West Fenway.) In the East Fenway, the Christian Science Church owns almost all the property east of Massachusetts Avenue and both sides of Huntington Avenue. It also has long-term options to repurchase the land under the Colonnade Hotel and the Church Park apartments. Northeastern and a few other schools



own buildings on the Fenway, Hemenway Street, Saint Stephen Street, and Huntington Avenue. It is feared that hospital expansion on the outskirts of the Fenway, will decrease the housing supply and increase traffic.

Fenway residents have ambivalent attitudes toward the institutions. They enjoy their services and amenities but want their expansion curtailed and their services and programs adjusted to local needs. Some residents believe that institutions should provide financial and other assistance for community initiated social services. Although the Fenway has Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox churches, "the Church" always refers to the Christian Science Church, which is often criticized for its prominent role in urban renewal planning and for failing to respond to local social problems. Some residents excoriate the Church for spending money on their Vatican, as it is sometimes called, and nothing for the neighborhood. Unfavorable comparisons are drawn to other sects. For some people, a religious demonstration without bingo, basketball teams, bean suppers, and summer camps cannot properly be called a religion at all.

### Open Space

#### Parks and playgrounds

The Fenway has several playgrounds and, behind Church Park, a small park is finally under construction in accordance with the 1968 site plan. Since no public money was ever allocated to this project, private contributions were solicited, but construction was repeatedly postponed for lack of funds. The Fens is a maturely beautiful link in the now interrupted belt of greenery Olmstead intended to extend from the Common to Jamaica Pond. Grounds, gazebos, and buildings are much in need of grooming,

repair, and maintenance. Only the area near the rose garden is well-kept. Despite the pollution of the odiferous Muddy River, ducks survive, and enormous liberated goldfish are occasionally sighted through the murk. Other assets are the garden plots allotted to nearby residents and Roberto Clemente field, a gathering point for sports, Summerthing concerts, and demonstrations.

#### The plaza

"I'm one of the plaza's defenders. I think it's a pleasant place, and plenty of people make use of it. I bring my children over to sail their boats."

-- a FenPAC member.

"I don't like it. The guards watch you. My son was trying to reach something in the water, and a guard came over to see what was going on. It's not really like a public park."

-- A former resident of Parcel 12.

The other major open space is the plaza of the Christian Science Church, built on a grand scale with fountains, a lengthy portico, a vast, rectangular reflecting pool, and an unobtrusive underground garage. It is usually underpopulated for its great size. If the original plan to frame the plaza with eleven story buildings along Huntington Avenue were ever carried out, its expanse would become more proportionate. On the southern side is a formal arrangement of rows of trees, flowers, and backless benches. Facing Massachusetts Avenue are more benches, a grassy strip, a paved area with clumps of trees confined by circular curbs, and a half circle of shallow steps leading to the new facade of the Mother Church with its massive Corinthian columns. The plaza is at its best at night with its focal points illuminated and its peripheral distractions in darkness. These distractions include wide, heavily travelled

streets and unplanned-for configurations of building forms, both new and old.

### Transportation

For both FenPAC and BRA thinkers, transportation planning means widening major streets and rerouting traffic in an effort to reduce the flow on residential streets and on the roads surrounding the Fens. The delusion persists that wider streets and more garages will eventually bear the traffic burden. A few people dream of parking for local residents and public minibusses for neighborhood use, but no official thought is given to these matters. The MBTA has four subway stations in the area, but, because of muggings, many elderly residents prefer bus travel to going underground.

### Summary:

The Fenway is well defined by various man-made obstructions which are comparable to natural boundaries in a rural area. It is not isolated and affords easy access to adjacent districts. But the connecting pathways, because of heavy traffic, serve within the Fenway as edges rather than seams<sup>5</sup>, and divide the neighborhood into discrete districts. Most housing units are in low rise apartment buildings, and many of these could stand repair. Compared to many city residential neighborhoods the Fenway provides adequate shopping; the existing facilities are criticized by residents who remember the greater variety of former times. A survey of existing commercial usage shows that stores do not come into being at the fiat of renewal planners; massive demolition and redevelopment is apt to result in a permanent impairment of commerce. Consumer demand for the services of small businesses may meet with inappropriate responses

for many years.

Most institutions are long established entities as old as the neighborhood itself and are undoubted assets to the metropolitan region. But to people whose interest is the viability of the Fenway as a place to live and shop, the institutions have been more of a liability than an asset, especially in recent years. Open space is extensive and interesting, but a few more small playgrounds would be desirable on residential side streets. Public transportation, though crowded, uncomfortable, and sometimes unreliable, is adequate in comparison to other neighborhoods. Major drawbacks are robberies and assaults in the subways and the great volume of automobile traffic.

## II. An Inventory of Fenway Organizations

### "Late Notes From the Fenwick

by Neil McGhee, Alphabet Editor

Let me fill you in on the latest happenings in the Fenwick.

FIG has been in contact with BCOA about BLAP. FenPAC, on the other hand, has, with the BRA, contacted ABCD about the forthcoming CDRG's. It is the hope of the YMCA that FYAC and FCHC will be in a position shortly to deal with AHC, but FATU has suggested that FIG and FYAC, and perhaps FenPAC, should be the ones to O.K. AHC.

My personal feeling in this whole matter is that BCOA, FATU, FCHC, AHC, FenPAC, FYAC, BRA, YMCA, BLAP, ABCD, and FIG would, if all run together, spell one hell of a funny-looking word.

By the way, three new organizations have entered the Fenwick. They are:

the Fenwick Legal In-service Project

the Fenwick Legal Assistance Project

the Fenwick Legal Outreach Project

Let's all give a hearty welcome to FLIP, FLAP, and FLOP."<sup>6</sup>

Fenway organizations may conveniently be divided into two categories, those providing social services and those representing various interest groups. Almost all of the service organizations are struggling for existence with little money and scarce volunteer labor. For the elderly there are recreation and education programs at two recently-constructed residences for senior citizens. There are church groups, lunch programs, and a Home Care Corporation. One of the oldest and most visible programs, the Boston Center for Older Americans, has had to close for lack of funds.

For children, there are four Youth Outreach Program workers, serving both sides of the Fenway. The Huntington Avenue YMCA has a youth department. The Boston Forum, a storefront facility sponsored by the Church has after-school, tutoring, and big brother/big sister programs. Local residents founded the Fenway Youth Activities Committee, the Burbank Day Care Center, and the Edgerly Road Playground. The Fenway Community

Center, a storefront in the West Fenway, conducts after-school and summer programs.

St. Clement's student parish and the Fenway Center for Campus Ministry serve the large student population. The Fenway Area Tenants' Union (FATU), in addition to the usual organizing, hopes to take part in the renovation, for low and moderate income tenants, of about 270 foreclosed and vacant units on Peterborough Street. A tenant management group is active at the Hemenway buildings, which were saved from demolition by demonstrations and subsequent negotiations with the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Other organizations run by community residents are the Fodd Co-op and the very successful Fenway Community Health Center. There is also the Free University of the Fenway and the all but penniless Community Development Corporation, which unsuccessfully sought FenPAC designation to rehabilitate a block of apartments. The city has opened a local office of the Little City Hall, and there are Fenway representatives on the local board of Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), a half-forgotten remnant of the 'war on poverty.'

The Fenway Group represents the large institutions and meets to discuss common problems and to iron out any differences which may arise. Conflicts, if they exist, are never aired in public. The Fenway Civic Association is a long-established group with a complicated organizational structure and a membership mostly of women. Speakers address the meetings, and problems such as crime prevention, litter, park maintenance, and street lighting are discussed. The Massachusetts Avenue Board of Trade represents the interests of small business owners.

Two groups represent specific neighborhoods. The St. Botolph Citizens'

Committee is concerned with crime, garbage, zoning, and traffic, and in recent years has supported urban renewal and new construction on Huntington Avenue. The group also favored construction of St. Botolph Towers, a Boston Housing Authority project for elderly residents. Small property owners are especially active. SABPOA, the Symphony Area Business and Property Owners' Association, was founded over two years ago to prevent crime, to pressure the city for street improvements and overdue water and sewer lines, and to try to persuade bankers to lend in the area. Internal pressure was to be exerted on landlords to correct building violations and to select respectable tenants. According to one member, Symphony Road was a "zoo" of prostitutes and drug pushers; it was necessary to change the image of the street completely so that town houses would become attractive to middle-class buyers. The SABPOA members are both townhouse owners and larger owners, who hope to establish the district's reputation as a viable pocket of housing.

The Fenway Interagency Group (FIG) was established in 1971 to discuss and investigate neighborhood problems, to share information, and to coordinate action. Task forces are formed from time to time to study crucial problems; these have included housing, crime, health, children, and institutions. Open meetings are held, and minutes and agendas are mailed to residents and interested groups. The most active members are community workers and volunteers from the service organizations. There is also a monthly community newspaper, the Fenway News, whose masthead slogan is "Comforting the afflicted, and afflicting the comfortable." The Fenway Gay Community Alliance (Fengay) represents the interests of the gay population.

Of the interest-group organizations, those which are currently most effective are the Symphony Area Business and Property Owners Association, the Saint Botolph Citizens Committee, and the Fenway News. The Fenway Interagency Group, after several years of militant resistance to the Fenway Urban Renewal Plan, has lately assumed a more quiescent role as a forum for discussion of social problems in the neighborhood. The Fenway Civic Association probably reached its zenith in the mid-sixties when it mustered considerable support for the Fenway Plan. Although it continues to hold regular meetings, attendance is down, and the aging membership has not been replaced with more active participants.



### III. Demographic Data

Whenever possible, data on population and housing will be based on the census blocks circumscribed by the Fenway boundaries described in section I of Part Two. This area is made up of one whole tract and portions of three others. Information not covered by block statistics will be collected from two typical tracts, J5/104 and J4/105. For tract J5/104, the 1970 statistics include the Tavern Road area behind North-eastern, with a population of 251 and 160 housing units. To make the 1970 block data comparable with 1960, this area was not counted in.

<u>1960 tracts</u>		<u>1970 tracts</u>
K4B	=	102 (the West Fenway)
J5	=	104 (the East Fenway)
J4	=	105 (St. Germain St., St. Botolph St.)
J3	=	106 (east end of St. Botolph St.)

#### A. Block Data

##### Population:

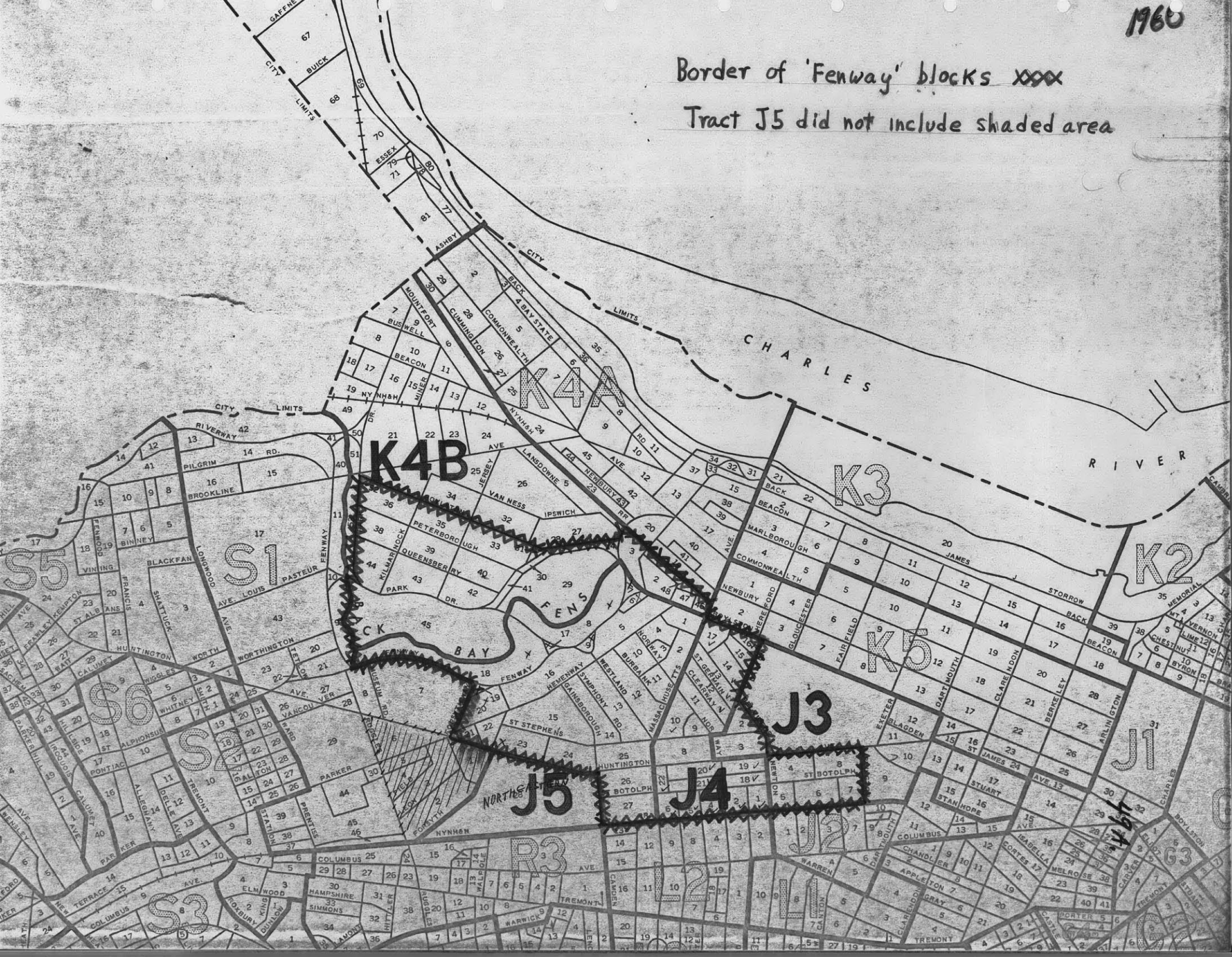
<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
K4B - 5243	102 - 4766
J5 - 7980	104 - 4376
J4 - 2952	105 - 2632
J3 - <u>1504</u>	106 - <u>654</u>
17679	17428

Population growth in tract J5/104 recurred in blocks where apartment buildings were converted to dormitories.

1960

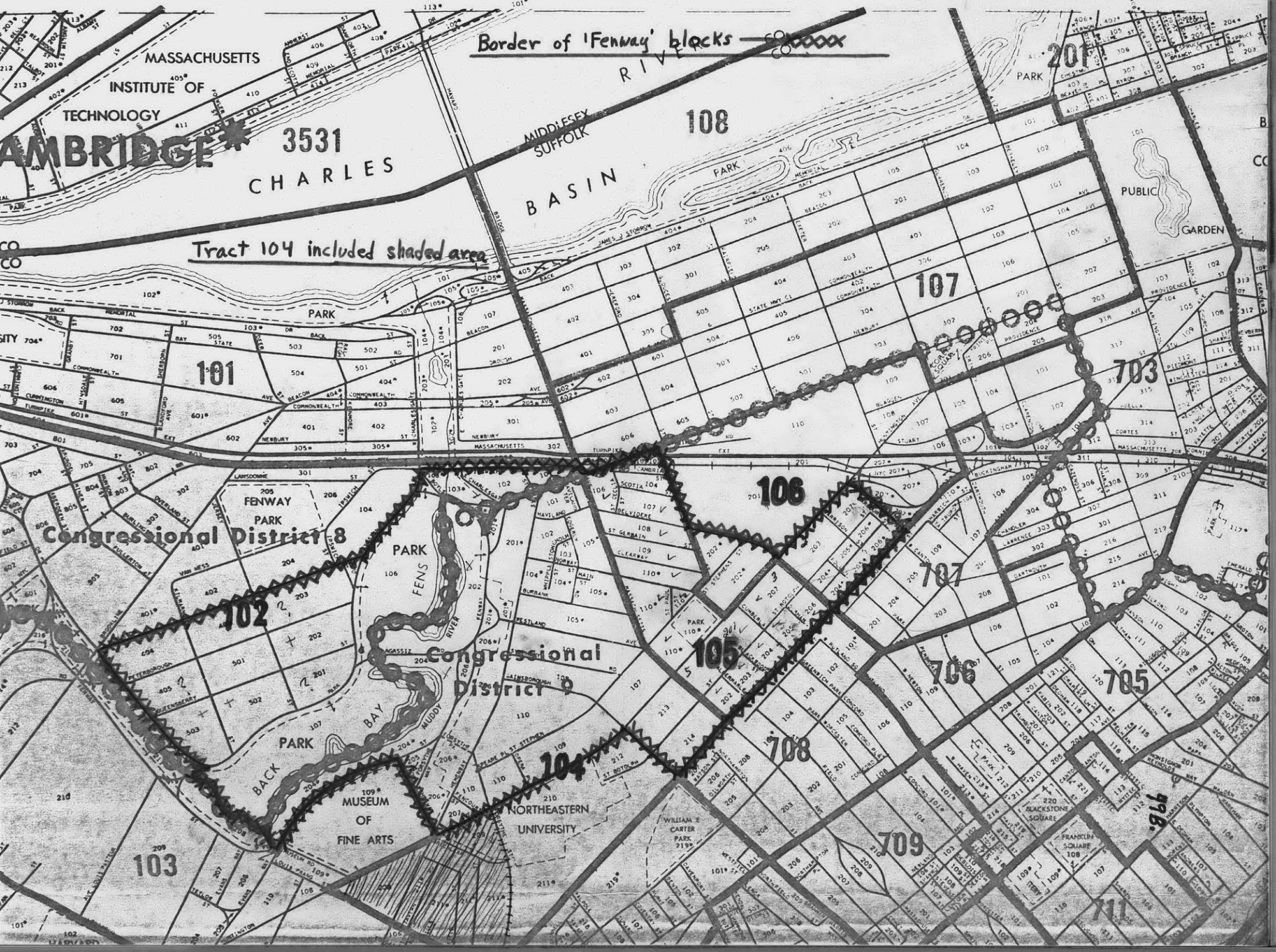
Border of 'Fenway' blocks xxx

Tract J5 did not include shaded area





1970



## Housing:

## number of units

<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
K4B - 3498	102 - 3135
J5 - 4622	104 - 4463
J4 - 1517	105 - 1238
J3 - <u>1068</u>	106 - <u>378</u>
10705	9214

The sharp decrease in units in tract J3/106 was mainly due to building demolition.

## occupied by non-white

## occupied by Negro

<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
K4B - 31	102 - 76
J5 - 229	104 - 300
J4 - 302	105 - 280
J3 - <u>29</u>	106 - <u>93</u>
591	749

Tract K4B/102 is the Fenway tract which is farthest away from the black residential district.

## owner occupied units

<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
K4B - 58	102 - 9
J5 - 111	104 - 72
J4 - 93	105 - 53
J3 - <u>43</u>	106 - <u>14</u>
305	148

## renter occupied units

<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
K4B - 3106	102 - 3026
J5 - 4252	104 - 3908
J4 - 1337	105 - 1092
J3 - <u>933</u>	106 - <u>342</u>
9628	8368

The percentage drop in the number of rented units for all tracts was much less than the percentage decline in the number of owner occupied units.

# B. Tract Data

	East Fenway		St. Germain - St. Botolph	
	<u>1960 - J5</u>	<u>1970 - 104</u>	<u>1960 - J4</u>	<u>1970 - 105</u>
<u>Total population</u>	7979	9627*	2952	2632
<u>Negro population</u>	367 (4.6%)	653 (6.8%)	693 (23.5%)	704 (26.7%)
<u>Population per household</u>	1.66	1.67	1.92	1.73
<u>Unrelated individuals</u>	4200	7408	1349	1734
<u>Age 65+</u>	1820 (22.8%)	1339 (13.9%)	597 (20.2%)	449 (17.1%)
<u>Under 18</u>	509 (6.6%)	394 (4.1%)	399 (13.5%)	251 (9.5%)
<u>Enrolled in school</u>	327	208	266	165
<u>Population age 5+ in</u>				
<u>same house 5 years ago</u>	3231	2151	1207	848
<u>different U.S. house 5 years ago</u>	3875	6030	1414	1274
<u>in Boston</u>	2155	1008	855	532
<u>elsewhere in U.S.</u>	1720	5022	559	742
<u>from abroad</u>	267	431	90	153

\* Including Tavern Road area.

Tract Data (continued)

	<u>East Fenway</u>		<u>St. Germain - St. Botolph</u>	
	<u>1960 - J5</u>	<u>1970 - 104</u>	<u>1960 - J4</u>	<u>1970 - 105</u>
<u>Family income</u>				
All families	1589	910	617	354
under \$ 1,000 - 1,999	223	32	62	31
\$ 2,000 - 3,999	426	114	181	40
4,000 - 5,999	410	195	170	84
6,000 - 7,999	252	159	85	80
8,000 - 9,999	175	127	76	24
10,000 - 14,999	72	197	36	42
15,000 - 24,999	23	52	7	53
25,000+	8	34	0	0
Median family income	\$4633	\$7348	\$4753	\$6917
in constant dollars*	\$5356	\$6211	\$5495	\$5927
Median income, families & unrelated individuals	\$2939	\$2027	\$2849	\$2650
in constant dollars*	\$3397	\$1737	\$3294	\$2271
<u>Housing units</u>				
% vacant and available	4.5%	10.6%	2.3%	7.5%
average rent*	\$ 71 (\$82 constant)	\$ 116 (\$99 constant)	\$ 62 (\$72 constant)	\$ 97 (\$83 constant)
median number of rooms	2.7	2.2	3.0	2.8

\*Constant dollar figures were derived from the Boston consumer price index, with 1967 as the base year.

C. Estimated Housing Changes, 1970 - 1975<sup>7</sup>.Demolished since 1970 census -- 242 units<sup>8</sup>.New Construction -- 789 units (Church Park, St. Botolph Towers,  
Morville House)

efficiencies	215
market rent	0
moderate rent	49
low rent	156
one bedroom	513
market rent	261
moderate rent	74
low rent	178
two bedroom	71
market rent	70
moderate rent	0
low rent	1
market rent units	331 (42%)
moderate rent units	123 (15.5%)
low rent units	335 (42.5%)

Estimated total units, 1975 -- 9,761

Planned new construction -- 374 units (Parcels 5 and 9)

efficiencies	104
one bedroom	242
two bedroom	28



If we assume that two-thirds of the units in the planning stages will be available at subsidized rents, the percentage of low and moderate rent units in new buildings will be 61%, or 707 new apartments replacing the total of 806 units demolished before and after the 1970 census. Only about 22 two bedroom apartments will be subsidized, and there will be no three or four bedroom units.

Since 1970, 515 apartments have been rehabilitated in five separate programs. One program was community-sponsored and privately financed, and three were financed by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency. The largest of the five was a HUD 221D3 project, but, as vacancies occur, these apartments are being converted from moderate to market rentals in excess of the Rent Control Board's maximum allowable rents. For this reason, only 272 of the 515 rehabilitated apartments will be available to tenants of low and moderate income. Of 394 units in four of the five projects, 63 (16%) have two bedrooms, and 22 (5.6%) have three bedrooms.

#### D. Conclusions

The following quotations are an example of the different perceptions of property owners and tenants about the nature and needs of the neighborhood. Both landlords and tenants realize that there is a trade-off between maintenance and rehabilitation on the one hand and housing prices on the other. Landlords fear deterioration most; tenants are afraid that upgrading will price them out of the Fenway. Property owners see the Fenway at present as a down-at-the-heels low rent district of potential utility, whereas the tenants believe that the area is already on the way to becoming a mainly upper-middle class neighborhood.

"BOS, SEVEN Sts. by Gibson. Let us get you in on the ground floor as a townhouse area comes back. Walk to Museums, Pru, Christian Science Center. Renovated two duplex \$32,000, financed. Townhouse exc. cond. 20s. Gibson 262-1245."9.

-- On my street landlords took advantage of the plan to rehab and subdivide apartments. My rent jumped from \$125 to \$195. In another building they moved eight families out, rehabbed the building, and raised rents from \$90 to \$200 or \$250. The Symphony Road Improvement Association just went down the drain with people moving out.

-- A FIG member

"I think they want to build the neighborhood up into a high society and get rid of the common ordinary people like you and me. They want to clear out the young people and people with kids. When the whole thing is done, it will probably be better for the people that live here, but none of the rest of us will be around. ... We pay \$140 a month for 6 rooms. We couldn't afford to stay in anything that's big enough for us. It would be at least \$100 more."

-- A Parcel 12 resident<sup>10</sup>.

-- We must fight rent control. The whole idea of tenant power is wrong. Rehabilitation and maintenance requires higher rent. We need a strong middle class, not the poor, and not the super-rich, but people in the \$30,000 - 100,000 bracket. The rest need Federal subsidies, but four million dollars won't put a dent in the problem.

-- A SABPOA member

-- The area must be improved as far as I'm concerned, and it bothers me that there are some who don't seem to want any change at all. There are plenty of vacancies at moderate rents for those who want to stay in the neighborhood. Subsidies could take care of a contingent.

-- A SABPOA member

"I wouldn't want to be kicked out to have these things rehabbed, but at some point that's what they'll need if they're going to last another 100 years. ... I knew I'd be kicked out and I couldn't afford to move in so I have to take a very reactionary viewpoint."

-- A Parcel 13 resident.<sup>11</sup>

Between 1960 and 1970, the population remained at about the same level despite demolition. But close examination reveals a shift in the composition of the population, with a decline in the proportion of children

and elderly residents, and an influx of students and younger 'unrelated' individuals. This shift is especially noticeable in those census blocks where buildings were converted to dormitories. The migration of young people also accounts for a striking increase in transiency, vacancies, and in mobility, as measured by the number of people whose home, five years previously, was outside the city of Boston.

The proportion of black residents gradually rose. By 1970 there were also Spanish-speaking and Chinese residents, but census data on Spanish-speaking people is ambiguous, and, in the case of the Chinese, non-existent. For the four Fenway tracts, the number of children declined from 1658 in 1960 to 1198 in 1970. The only non-Fenway children included in these figures are from the Prudential Center and a small residential area around the Audubon Circle near the Boston-Brookline line.

From 1960 to 1970, owner occupancy declined by more than 50%, and the median number of rooms per apartment was somewhat reduced. As a rule, however, there was no need to subdivide apartments to increase rental income since large apartments could easily be let to groups. Average rents increased about 60%, a little higher than percentage gains in median family income. Median income for families and unrelated individuals combined actually declined over the decade. The contours of the income distribution scale also changed; a pear-shaped configuration, heavy at the lower levels, became a figure with a pronounced waist at the middle ranges. (See graph on page 59 and tract data on page 53.) This income distribution change was caused by an increase of upper-middle income residents and by the decrease in housing units available to low and moderate income tenants.

Between 1970 and 1975, the establishment of the Rent Control Board may have exerted some downward pressure on rising rents. But the board's procedures leave much to tenant initiative. Tenants must request a hearing and organize themselves to present an effective case. Hearings are usually held when most people are working. Because of rapid apartment turnover in the Fenway, the area is especially vulnerable to the newly instituted vacancy decontrol provision, whereby rents in apartments vacated after December 31, 1975 are no longer regulated by the Board. Organization is especially difficult when a large proportion of tenants consists of temporary residents from outside the city.

To sum up, a scrutiny of the 1960 and 1970 U.S. census data reinforces the impression that many individuals and families of modest means left the Fenway. They were replaced by an influx of students and a trickle of relatively affluent residents. The completion of new apartments in accordance with the Fenway Plan would do very little to stop this trend. But an expected decline in college enrollments will probably stabilize the percentage of student residents, and scarcity of mortgage financing, if it continues, will hamper the sale of townhouses and the construction of new or remodelled high rent apartments.

# Family Income Distribution, Fenway Tracts J5/104 and J4/105

<u>Income</u>	1960 <u>No. of families</u>	1970 <u>No. of families</u>
25,000 +	8	34
15,000 - 24,999	30	105
10,000 - 14,999	108	239
8,000 - 9,999	251	151
6,000 - 7,999	337	239
4,000 - 5,999	580	279
2,000 - 3,999	607	154
under 1,000 - 1,999	285	63
	2,206	1,264

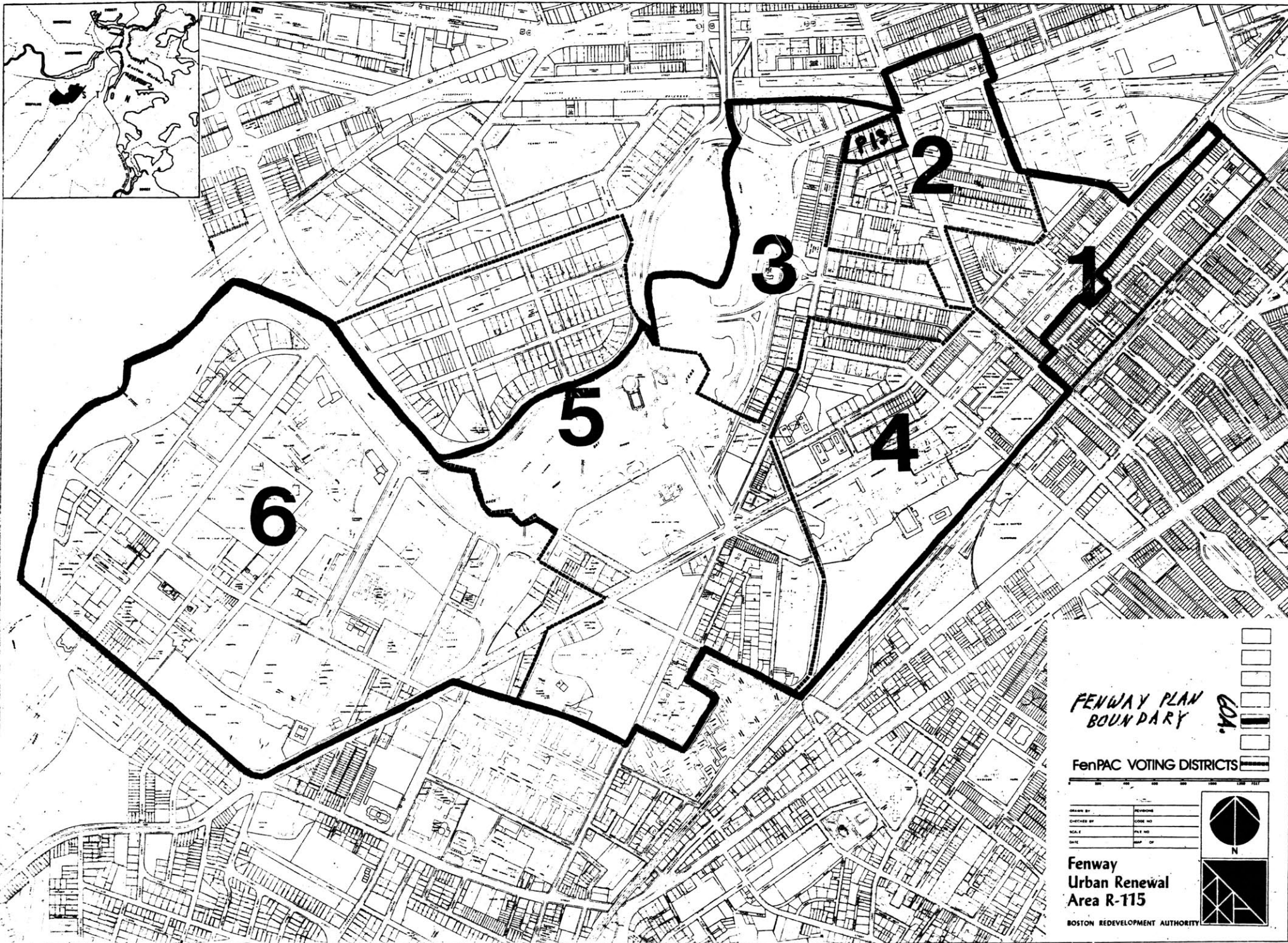
### Part Three -- The Fenway Plan and Renewal Politics

#### I. The Plan and Public Opinion

##### Origins of the Fenway Urban Renewal Plan

Planning for the Fenway-Kenmore District, including Mission Hill, began with Boston Redevelopment Authority studies in the late fifties and early sixties. Interest quickened in 1965 when the BRA became aware of the Christian Science Church's plans for expansion. Development goals were found to coincide, and a plan was promptly devised. To reduce local opposition, the Mission Hill, West Fenway, Kenmore Square, and Saint Botolph Street districts were excluded when the Fenway Plan boundaries were established, but most schools, hospitals, and museums were kept within the renewal area.

The provisions of the Urban Renewal Act of 1954 smoothed the way for both institutional and private development. Of particular interest in the case of the Fenway area were the so-called section 112 institutional credits, whereby spending by institutions on new or upgraded facilities could be used to reduce the local cash share required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to receive federal grants. Since the Fenway generated 12.7 million dollars worth of credits, more than any other planning district in Boston, the local share was reduced to two million dollars.<sup>1</sup> Federal grants for the Fenway Plan totaled 14.3 million. An added advantage was that city planning authorities could combine the credits of different planning districts. According to a BRA memo referring to the South End renewal area, "(p)ooling of excess non-cash grant-in-aid credits from several other projects will eliminate the



cash requirement now outstanding and increase the Project Capital Grant by a like amount."<sup>2</sup>.

Another planning incentive was the practise of land cost write-downs, the selling of cleared and improved sites to developers for considerably less than the price paid by the BRA. In some instances land was rented to developers on a long-term basis instead of being sold outright. Seizure of property by eminent domain was also a possibility. A developer could usually negotiate with the city for special property tax treatment and pay about 15 - 20% of yearly project income, in accordance with section 121A of the Massachusetts General Laws. In the Fenway the extent of Church land ownership greatly facilitated the acquisition of development sites. The Church holds long-term options to repurchase land it once owned.

#### Provisions of the Plan

The stated goals of the plan were to "promote the public good" by encouraging coordinated action and cooperative efforts by public, private, and institutional entities. Physical and economic upgrading would provide "more wholesome ... environmental conditions." "Improved public facilities" would "promote confidence in the future of the area." Revitalized surroundings for the residential streets were expected to "stimulate rehabilitation ... by private action." Consolidated institutional facilities would "make more efficient use of scarce land."

Some of the more specific objectives were to increase the tax base, to direct institutional growth to meet both "reasonable institutional needs and community objectives," and to provide open space "to enhance



the setting of the important cultural institutions." "Obsolete, incompatible, deteriorating and substandard buildings and incompatible land uses which ... contribute to the growth of blight" were to be eliminated. "Private investment" would provide new "housing of maximum architectural quality," with "the highest possible levels of amenity, convenience, usefulness and livability for the occupants thereof." There was also a tensely-worded provision for "low and moderate-rental housing for families, individuals, and the elderly." New "locally-oriented shopping facilities designed to meet the needs of the adjacent residential community" would be concentrated on Massachusetts Avenue. The plan also called for more off-street parking, pedestrian walkways, and improved traffic circulation.

The plan further provided that "(a)ll new residential and commercial development should be compatible with the existing structures and character of this area." High rise towers, located at prominent corner sites on Massachusetts Avenue, would serve as gateways to the neighborhood. New buildings "should not form a wall between existing residential communities and ... commercial activity on Massachusetts and Huntington Avenues, ... but rather should stimulate visual and social interrelationships."

Several streets near Northeastern University and in the core area of the Church were designated for BRA acquisition and subsequent disposition for "development in accordance with the objectives of this Plan." No other mention is made of the Church's plans for demolition and new construction; because the Church already owned all the land except for the public streets, the core area was not a disposition parcel. Major dis-

position parcels were located on Huntington and Massachusetts Avenues and were designated for new construction with mixed residential and commercial use. In some instances maximum floor-area ratios were specified, and requirements were listed for various amenities.

It was estimated that about 817 households and 137 businesses would be gradually relocated over a four year period and that normal turnover in public and private housing, combined with new construction in the Fenway itself, would provide enough suitable apartments. Moving expenses would be paid both for households and businesses, and a trained staff would relocate the displaced according to their requirements for neighborhood, space, and rent levels. Inspection would "assure ... decent, safe and sanitary standard housing." "Special attention" was to be paid "to the relocation problems of low-income and elderly families and individuals."<sup>3</sup>

The language and provisions of the Fenway Plan gave the impression that almost everyone would be a beneficiary of the renewal process with only minimal inconvenience for a few. The possibility of conflicting interests between institutions and residents, homeowners and renters, storekeepers and developers, or motorists and pedestrians was not acknowledged. All elements of the community were seen as comprising a harmonious entity with common needs and negotiable priorities. The public good was a tangible thing; all rational beings could identify it. No details were furnished about the economic impact of the project, methods of financing, or the appearance and price of the final product. There was no way to tell which projects would be built first. The plan itemized the properties to be demolished and estimated the number of tenants who

would have to move, but no attempt was made to quantify either need or market demand and relate these to any future public benefits the project might bestow.

### Dissent and Resistance

#### The first hearing

Resistance to development on Parcel 13 is an instance of long-standing dissension about the entire Fenway Plan. On Friday, November 19, 1965, at 10:30 A.M., supporters and opponents gathered in Horticultural Hall for a public hearing before the BRA board. All seats were taken; an overflow crowd had to sit in another room. Proponents spoke first. According to Edward Logue, the director of the BRA, the plan would provide a framework for controlled growth in the area and a "high standard of design." Unrelated land use and blighting influences would be checked or eliminated, and "the tax yield" to the city would grow "by more than one million a year." Erwin Canham, editor of the Christian Science Monitor, emphasized that "deteriorating conditions breed lawlessness." The Church had an "interest in the quality and improvement of the surroundings." "The need for improving the environment which now surrounds the Church center was one of the major reasons why we developed our own plans and why we have been acquiring property over a considerable period of years." There would be more jobs, more apartments, more parking spaces, and "efficient new ... retail space." A local lawyer endorsed the plan in the interest of "a first-class, number-one city."

Also in favor of the project were spokesmen for the Boston Symphony, the Horticultural Society, four major banks, and several colleges. Rep-

representatives of Wentworth Institute and the Museum of Fine Arts were grateful for assurances that the Fenway portion of the proposed Inner Belt highway would be built below ground level. A group of 35 merchants and the Back Bay Association endorsed the plan, and the Fenway Civic Association presented 855 favorable signatures from residents and Fenway employees. Many signers were said to be residents of buildings scheduled for demolition who hoped to move to new apartments. Plans for new housing had the support of Monseigneur Mackey of St. Cecelia's, and Father Finley of St. Anne's, "the little church down the street, not the big one," was convinced that the "plan ... respects the people." John Deedy of the Building Trades Union noted that Scientists "subscribe to the highest standards" and was glad of the "participation of our very best citizens." His union "put human rights above property rights" and had disagreed with the BRA in the past. But this plan called for low income housing and large allowances for relocation; there would, he thought, be no "harsh treatment" of the affected people.

Three local politicians spoke in opposition. One called the plan "a loosely worded, deceptive, and dangerous document" which would result in more dormitories, parking spaces, and widened streets. Another demanded priority for residents and businesses; new buildings should be constructed over the Turnpike and on vacant lots. State Senator Oliver Ames said he was not opposed to the project, but like several other speakers, he thought the plan had been hastily devised without adequate discussion and that the time of the hearing was inconvenient and poorly publicized. He hoped for more detailed hearings before the City Council.

Small businessmen and property owners were a plurality among the

opponents. They complained most of all of compulsion; they would either have to accept inadequate compensation or have their buildings taken by eminent domain. Their livelihoods would be endangered for the sake of profits for large developers and for frivolous aesthetic considerations of dubious validity. They saw themselves as guiltless victims, caught in a coveted location which powerful interests wanted to appropriate.

"(B)y their own admission ... everything has got to be architecturally the same. You can't make everything the same. This is America; we have the right to be different.

"... I thought I owned my building. I found out that we don't own our property. Private enterprise will come in and rebuild my property because it is across from the Prudential, or the Prudential is across from me, depending on how you look at it."

-- Edward Yasbeck, of Huntington Avenue

"Isn't this project being tailored to suit the dreams and aspirations of the preselected developer? Is such a procedure moral? Is such a procedure fair? Is such a procedure legal? Is such a procedure good planning? Do the dreams and aspirations of the people and merchants in the area count?"

-- Benjamin Rodman, Huntington Avenue storekeeper

According to Mr. Bluestein of Parcel 13, there would be no need for opposition "if we could be assured or guaranteed that we could be put in a proposition, that we could continue our livelihood." Another sore point was the Church's attitude to liquor. Mr. Rodman noted that "(t)he pre-selected developer for religious reasons cannot tolerate a liquor store." And in the opinion of a waitress living on Parcel 13, the new apartment buildings would have "no places for single women who are working as waitresses and serving liquor and food." She predicted that most apartments would be taken by aging suburbanites who no longer wanted the bother of maintaining single family houses. Institutional credits were the main issue for another woman, a former resident of Mission Hill.

"(T)his is the ... dearest and most valuable project to the Boston Redevelopment because by each dollar that every hospital, school, college in this area spends, the Boston Redevelopment, the city of Boston will get two for one. ... This is going to take care of the Redevelopment Authority for the whole city of Boston."<sup>4</sup>.

#### Demolition and construction

After this testimony, at 12:45 P.M., the hearing was adjourned. A month later similar opinions, pro and con, were stated before the City Council for three consecutive days, with subsequent Council approval. Five years of development activity followed, with no organized resistance to the project. The Department of Housing and Urban Development gave final approval on March 17, 1967. The process of property acquisition began in 1966, and, in 1968 and 1969, buildings were torn down along Huntington Avenue and on the sites of future apartments on and near Massachusetts Avenue. In 1968 a large and colorful site map became available, and the Hunneman real estate firm prepared two reports for the BRA, one on land utilization and marketability, and another on transient housing. The decision was made to use Parcel 2, at the Copley Square end of Huntington Avenue, for a hotel rather than the housing called for in the plan. In 1969 a Fenway Diagnostic Report and a Progress Report were prepared. Work started first on the new Church buildings, and in 1970 construction began on the Colonnade Hotel, the Church Park apartments, and on Morville House, an apartment building for the elderly, sponsored by the Episcopal church.

#### The FIG housing task force

By the early seventies, objections to the Fenway Plan were renewed

and broadened to include the housing issue as well as the loss of stores. Resistance was organized mostly by residents, while small businessmen generally remained behind their counters. In November of 1971 the Fenway Interagency Group was formed, and since a major concern was the lack of adequate apartments at reasonable prices, a housing task force was convened. Six years had passed since the public hearing for the Fenway Plan, and the expected new and rehabilitated apartments had not materialized. Much demolition had occurred, but new construction was so far limited to Church buildings, the hotel, Church Park, and Morville House. Members were distressed to learn that no arrangements had been made for low-rent apartments in Church Park, despite the sponsorship of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency. Another irritant was the construction of the hotel on a site intended for moderate income housing. There were also complaints about inadequate relocation procedures and high rents in new commercial space.

The housing task force made inquiries. It seemed that almost all disposition parcels were destined for luxury housing; there were no plans for low or moderate rent apartments for families, and even many of the new apartments for elderly residents would go beyond the financial reach of most of the intended beneficiaries. Some people also objected to the impersonal appearance and scale of the new buildings. It was felt that they were monotonous, intimidating, and out of keeping with the character of the surrounding streets. The Church, it was said, wanted to fend off the old neighborhood with a fortress of apartments for the affluent.

Resistance tactics.

In the spring of 1972 FIG decided to publicize its cause. A protest demonstration of mostly elderly residents was held at Church Park, demanding that the promise of low rent for 25% of the units be fulfilled. Later that year there was a well-publicized and theatrical demonstration at the Parcel 3 parking lot on Huntington Avenue, where Max Wasserman was planning to build high rise, high rent apartments. In October protesters of all ages burst in upon a banquet of the American Institute of Planners at the nearby Sheraton-Boston Hotel, dressed as Indians in accordance with the conference's 'Boston Tea Party' theme. They filed silently to the head table and presented Edward Logue, the one-time director of the BRA, with several cartons of rubble, each labelled with the name of a noted renewal project. An elderly Fenway resident, who had been seated at a table by a contingent of sympathizers among the conventioners, rose and spoke briefly. The demonstrators had the satisfaction of seeing Logue blush deeply and deny any responsibility for the West End, a massive slum clearance project of the late fifties. They filed out to a smattering of applause from the maverick planners. In November there was a demonstration protesting the plans of the Massachusetts Historical Society to demolish 24 Society-owned apartments on Hemenway for a parking lot. State Senator Jack Backman joined the picket line, and TV cameras were present. Letters were sent to the Society's membership asking for support for rehabilitation of the buildings. Later that winter two of these apartments were occupied by squatters.

Legal and political pressure was also applied. In the fall of 1972 there were hearings before the City Council. Residents and shopkeepers



testified that the BRA was not carrying out the stated purpose of the Fenway Plan. There were complaints about high rents for new apartments and stores, inadequate help with relocation, and insufficient progress with rehabilitation. The Colonnade Hotel, it was said, constituted a major change in the plan, which should not have been made without City Council approval. Another issue was the application of Fenway institutional credits to projects beyond the plan's boundaries. The main purpose was to urge the Council to reject the BRA's Workable Program on the grounds that the BRA had not included enough local groups in the planning process. Since acceptance of a Workable Program was required by Washington, it was expected that rejection would stall implementation of the plan. Later that winter a group of residents, with the assistance of lawyers from the Boston Legal Assistance Project, initiated a class action suit in federal court against HUD, the BRA, and the Church, requesting that the defendants be enjoined from further renewal activity until the Fenway Plan could be altered to conform to the interests of the plaintiffs as typical residents of the community. This suit came to be known as the Jones versus Lynn case. In November representatives of eighteen local groups began planning regulations and election procedures for a Project Advisory Committee.

Anti-renewal activists won some victories through these tactics. In November, 1972 the City Council rejected the Workable Program, but BRA officials did not appear to be noticeably intimidated by this action. The Massachusetts Historical Society proved to be an easy mark compared to other Fenway institutions, succumbing, after a brief struggle, to neighborhood pressures for rehabilitation of their property. Rents were

moderate, and several local people were hired for construction jobs. At Church Park about 35% of the units were set aside for low and moderate income tenants, but since all two bedroom apartments were excluded from subsidies, there was still cause for dissatisfaction.

#### FIG and the Church

In March of 1973, the Jones versus Lynn plaintiffs won a temporary injunction against further renewal action on disposition parcels. But no legal tactics could prevent the Church from tearing down the Woolworth block on Massachusetts Avenue, with 54 large apartments and 17 stores, in order to complete the plaza. When talks with Church officials broke off, FIG members tried to enlist the support of grass-roots Scientists. Churchgoers were offered fact sheets and leaflets urging them to lobby the Directors and support the demand for "no more demolition until the health of the community is given a priority." Scientists were reminded that the "spiritual quality of your faith will indeed be judged by its material manifestations in the physical world." The deficiencies in the Fenway Plan constituted a disease; "(t)he illness is far advanced. ... We cannot believe that Christian Scientists, so much concerned with the healing of disease through a spiritual understanding and a vision of wholeness, can allow this to continue."<sup>5</sup>

But many Scientists felt harassed by these tactics and resisted criticism of Church expansion. Leafletters were ushered out of the plaza by uniformed guards, and explanations of the Church's side of the controversy were promptly distributed to the membership. This reaction spurred renewal opponents to greater efforts, and a series of demonstra-

tions was planned to coincide with the June meetings, a three-day conference of Scientists from all sections of the country.

Since previous experience had shown that members were hard to convince, the demonstrations were designed for maximum theatrical effect and consequent publicity; if the Church could not be talked out of its plans, it might be embarrassed into changing its attitude. Posters urged residents to "support life in the Fenway"; a branch of ailanthus sprouting from cracked concrete symbolized the theme. Several tables were set up to dispense leaflets and lemonade to the conventioners. There were songs, responsive readings, and street theater in the plaza. Two gigantic puppets, labelled "BRA" and "CSC," embraced each other at intervals before the main door to the Mother Church. A procession of black-robed marchers mourned "the death of the Fenway" and carried a coffin through the residential streets and around the plaza. The coffin was left at the Church's door. For the children there was a picnic and swim-in at the reflecting pool. Although the press was attentive, there was little dialogue between Scientists and demonstrators. Church members gently explained that they favored grass, trees, and cleanliness. They felt the inner city was not a suitable place for raising children. The Church passively endured FIG's activities and waited until the membership left the city before stopping children from using the pool.

The June meetings, as it developed, were the last occasion for large-scale, time-consuming demonstrations. Renewal opponents gave up on the Church. Most Scientists, the demonstrators thought, heard, spoke, and saw no evil. They were deemed to be insensitive to the problems of city people and, for that reason, invulnerable. Later that year, when the

Woolworth block came down, the last obstacle to the expansion of the plaza was removed. But development on disposition parcels could still be hampered by legal tactics and by the formation of a Project Advisory Committee.

#### The FenPAC elections

Over the summer the focus of anger shifted back to the BRA. The FenPAC working committee pressured BRA officials about election funds and regulations. The committee, which had the support of the City Council, appealed to the Mayor, but by the time of PAC elections in October, a number of issues were still unsettled. The powers, the staff, and the budget of the PAC were not specified, and the BRA planned to give seats to representatives of "special interest groups ... that were afraid to compete in open elections." The working committee drew up a 'community slate' of eight candidates, with a platform which called for a strong PAC with a paid staff and veto powers, an emphasis on rehabilitation, and housing at low and moderate rents. Regular open meetings would prevent secrecy, and a moratorium on BRA actions would provide a clean start for future planning. As for candidates not endorsed by the working committee, "(n)one have worked toward a FenPAC but now the pie is baked and everyone wants a slice."<sup>6</sup> Potential voters were also reminded that the people behind the community slate were responsible for the day care center, the playground, the Health Center, the Food Co-op, and the rehabilitation of the Hemenway Street apartments.

Of the five slate candidates who ran by voting district, three won, but two of these had run unopposed from the districts closest to renewal

action. The slate lost in the two townhouse districts around Saint Botolph and Saint Stephen's Streets. Slate candidates also won two of the three at-large seats. At the last moment a resident caretaker of the Gardner Museum decided to run, unendorsed and unopposed, for district six, where the population consisted almost entirely of dormitory residents. After the four local organizations had selected their representatives, the seats sponsored by the PAC working committee were outnumbered eight to five. The BRA-appointed groups were the Fenway Group (representing area institutions), the Fenway Civic Association, the Symphony Area Business and Property Owners' Association, and the Saint Botolph Citizens' Committee.

#### Jones versus Lynn: the terms of settlement

In May of 1974 the Jones versus Lynn case was settled out of court, the terms to be in effect until April, 1977. The BRA and the Church were to use their best efforts to obtain subsidies so that 25% of the new units would be leased at low-income rents. To enhance project feasibility, the Church was to sell its land to developers at or below cost, if need be. Parcel 13 was excluded from rent or height stipulations. Nothing was said about the mix of bedroom sizes, and there was no stipulation that apartments of all sizes be subject to subsidies. The plaintiffs won a two person staff and office space for FenPAC and the power to delay BRA activities. Stubborn disputes between FenPAC and the BRA Director would be decided finally by the BRA Board. Activists were disappointed at the terms of settlement and thought that the lawyers had given in too easily.

### The shift to self-help action

By this time the mood of renewal opponents had changed and resistance became less aggressive in style. A few real victories had been won, but despite all the effort expended on demonstrations, the court suit, and the FenPAC, the goal of improved living conditions for the majority of Fenway residents seemed as far away as ever. The Fenway Interagency Group became much less visible as it turned from mass meetings and demonstrations to conventional pressure-group methods. FIG continued to gather and dispense information about services and neighborhood problems, respond to various emergencies, contact city officials, and publicize its views in the press. At the same time, more sentiment developed for positive, constructive activities to supplement the tactics of resistance.

Since self-help projects, such as the Health Center, had brought about some tangible benefits, interest shifted in that direction. Expanded services, subsidized housing, and job creation would mean more income for area residents. Tenant organizing could keep rents down and discourage speculation. In theory at least, less income for landlords would decrease property values and make for easier acquisition by community groups. Both the newly-organized Community Development Corporation and the Fenway Area Tenant Union hoped to rehabilitate housing and to eventually create jobs in construction, management, and maintenance. If sponsoring housing proved successful, participation in commercial development was also a possibility for the distant future. But time and labor were scarce, and money, nonexistent. So far no plans for housing development have been realized.

### The status of FenPAC

FIG refused to accept an appointed seat on FenPAC, fearing that to do so would weaken its argument that the PAC was an illegally constituted body. Another irritant was the hiring issue; to the PAC majority the demand that qualified residents be given first consideration for staff positions was an example of self-seeking cronyism. Two of the five community slate representatives began to vote against the interests of FIG-affiliated residents. Two of the remaining slate members, dismayed at being constantly outvoted, stopped attending meetings, and renewal opponents were left open to the charge of being poor losers. In the opinion of the people who had brought it into existence, FenPAC had become an untrustworthy institution, the creature of the BRA, developers, and property owners.

Over the winter of 1974-1975, this attitude was somewhat modified for several reasons. By this time the PAC had been functioning effectively for several months and appeared to have some influence with BRA planners. It became obvious that the PAC possessed the greater part of whatever power could be exerted to alter the Fenway Plan. Although a new federal court suit had been initiated, charging that the composition of the PAC was contrary to federal regulations, the litigants weren't entirely confident about the prospects for a favorable verdict, since success in court was thought to require proof of actual harm to residents. Lastly, from the viewpoint of renewal opponents, the voting records of PAC members whose seats had been challenged were often no worse than the records of several slate members. Under these conditions, interest in FenPAC revived, and attendance at meetings increased.

"We wanted to maintain a purist position and keep our credibility as advocates. But now I think FIG probably should have taken the appointed seat."

-- A FIG member

"We used to be on the same side, but now she votes against us and he follows her lead. It dates back to the elections for state rep, the Johnson-Noble brouhaha. We were for Johnson, and now she's against any project of ours, anything she's not in charge of."

-- A Fenway renewal opponent

"We wanted to be democratic and have people of all sorts on the PAC, not just the people who get up and speak at meetings. But next time we'll have to make sure we have people who won't be led around by the nose."

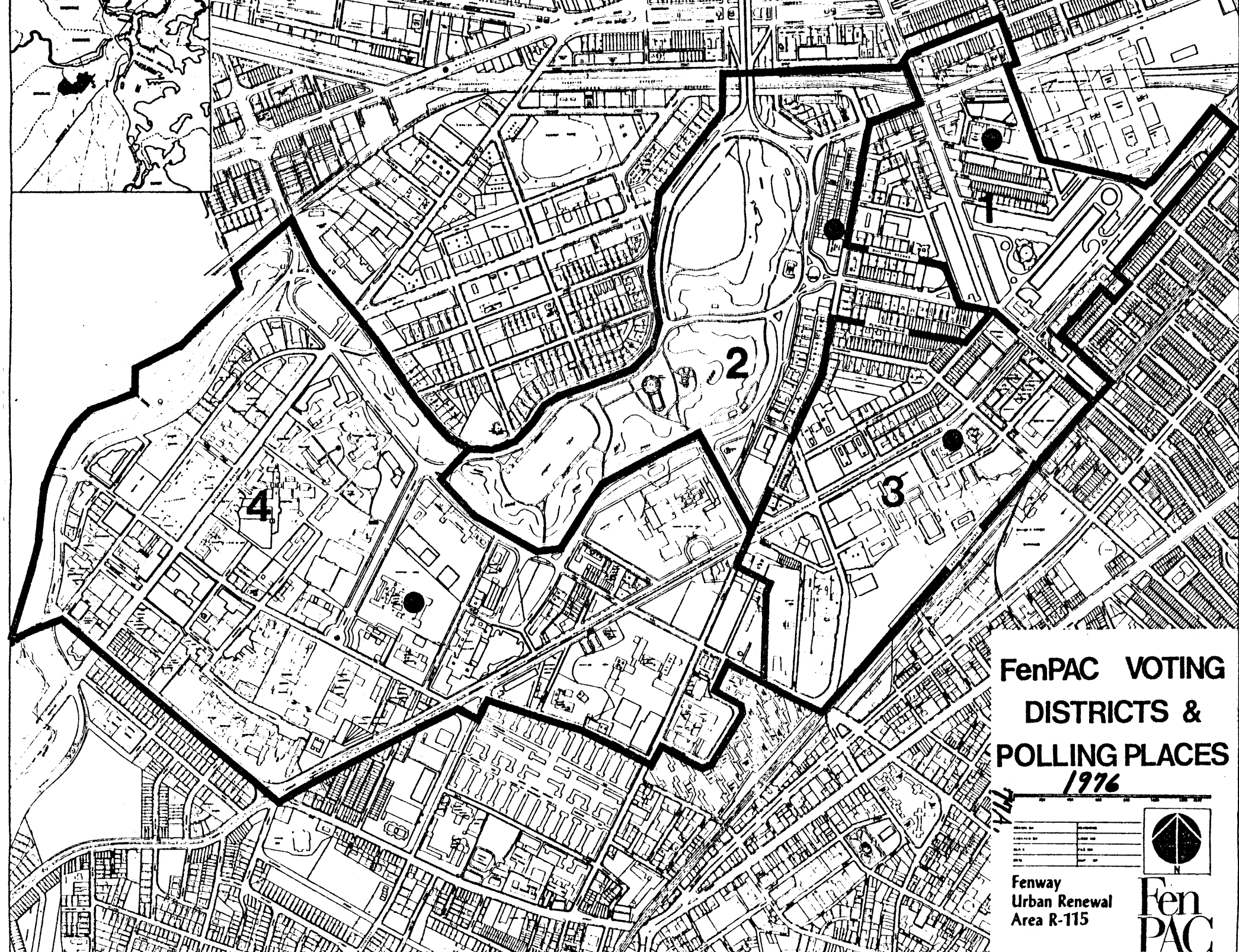
-- A Parcel 13 resident

#### The second FenPAC election

In late August of 1975, Federal Judge W. Arthur Garrity ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, accepting the reasoning that institutions and organizations are not entitled to guaranteed PAC representation because they have other means of making their influence felt. New elections were ordered. All FenPAC seats were to be held by elected residents of the renewal area. The court order eliminated representation from Saint Botolph Street and the West Fenway. The new residence requirement disqualified seven of the thirteen PAC members from seeking election.

Because the city election board for a time refused to conduct the election, it was repeatedly postponed until March 30, 1976, seven months after the judge's decision. The FenPAC majority at first considered a countersuit, but in the opinion of the BRA legal staff this course would probably have been futile. FenPAC then busied itself with drawing up new district boundaries and election boundaries, which provided that, unlike the first election, only registered voters would be allowed to vote. The





**FenPAC VOTING  
DISTRICTS &  
POLLING PLACES  
1976**

Scale	0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000
Legend	
Map	
Area	
Scale	

Fenway  
Urban Renewal  
Area R-115



**Fen  
PAC**

community slate members noted that this provision meant that many representative residents would be unable to participate and requested, to no avail, that potential voters be registered at the polls on election day.

Two competing slates of district and at-large candidates were assembled. The Concerned Citizens were the designated heirs of the FenPAC majority and ran on a platform of support for the previous actions of the PAC. They listed a variety of desirable objectives, including improved housing, cleaner streets, safer pedestrian crossings, and park improvements, without indicating how these goals ranked in order of priority. The top issue for the Neighborhood Slate was the protection of Fenway tenants and the provision of affordable housing, with the maximum number of subsidies in both new and rehabilitated buildings. The Slate candidates promised to back tenant unions and to use the influence of the PAC to support rent control. A victorious Neighborhood Slate would concern itself not only with physical planning, but would also support the expansion of social services.

Both sides conducted vigorous and well organized campaigns. Neighborhood Slate candidates emphasized their past record of initiating community services and noted that the Concerned Citizens participated in civic and street improvement associations. These contrasting backgrounds were said to be symptomatic of the differing priorities of the competing slates. The Concerned Citizens accused the Neighborhood Slate of promising more than it could deliver, since the PAC was empowered to engage only in physical planning and renewal.

On the thirtieth of March, a large portion of the electorate, composed overwhelmingly of senior citizens, went to the polls. The Concerned

Citizens won every one of the contested seats, and the Neighborhood Slate had to console itself with the fact that it received 41% of the vote. In district 4, the school and hospital area, three candidates ran as write-ins, one for the Concerned Citizens, and two for the Neighborhood Slate. Since all three failed to earn the 35 votes required for election, the question of representation for that district remained to be settled.

In the first PAC election, in which all residents over eighteen were allowed to vote, slate candidates won five of the nine elected seats, even though the campaign was relatively inefficient. In retrospect, it seems that the undoing of the Neighborhood Slate lay in the failure to recognize that the exclusion of unregistered voters would ensure their defeat. The Neighborhood Slate protested this exclusion only out of a desire for maximum participation, since the level of registration among Fenway residents is low. Because they did not foresee total defeat, and because for many months the occurrence of any kind of election was in some doubt, they failed to press the issue in the courts. Such a suit would have been the third initiated by the group. There are undoubtedly other reasons for the loss, but why elderly voters should prefer the Concerned Citizens to the Neighborhood Slate remains something of a mystery.

## II. Planning the Fenway's Future -- Two Viewpoints

### Introduction

Over the past two years the FenPAC experience has polarized the neighborhood, dividing renewal opponents not only from the BRA and institutional planners, but also from a contingent of local property owners and their allies who lend qualified support to the Fenway Plan and dominate the PAC. The labels of 'Citizens' and 'Partisans' are as descriptive as any, although until the recent election the factions themselves had no consistent terms for each other. It must be emphasized that the following portraits of the contenders are descriptions of TENDENCY, ideal types drawn from interviews, casual conversation, observation at meetings, and written opinions in local papers. My intention is to reproduce as accurately as possible the opinions of most members of each faction about both their own group and the opposition, without assessing the validity of either viewpoint.

The most active participants in the Citizen group are middle class professionals, owner-occupants of townhouses, rooming house keepers, and landlords. There is much tenant support as well, especially tenants who are friendly with resident landlords, contented residents of Church-owned property, or institutional employees. Most citizens are over thirty and under sixty, although retired women predominate in the rather dormant Fenway Civic Association. In addition to the FCA, the Citizens are members of the Saint Botolph Citizens' Committee and the Symphony Area Business and Property Owners' Association.

The Partisans are somewhat younger, less affluent, and more hetero-

geneous in life style. The majority are sub-employed health and social workers, with a few parents, students, a nun, and a priest. A few retired people attend meetings, but take a less active part. Almost all are local tenants affiliated with FIG and service-providing groups such as the Health Center, the Fenway Area Tenants' Union, the Fenway Youth Activities Committee, and the Food Co-op. The two factions differ in methods, priorities, and styles of thought and bear each other considerable ill will.

#### The Partisan View

"Civic and neighborhood associations are a small town concept. Their image is middle-class Americana, and it's congenial to the authorities. The big institutions think of them as the best and healthiest members of the community. ... They derive status from their socioeconomic position, and the BRA grants them the illusion of power. ... They get their way on trivial issues, but because their goals are similar to the BRA's, they are not really effective agents of change."

-- A Health Center board member

"Groups like SABPOA don't deal with people. The fundamental difference is that they're middle class and comfortable. They possess things and think some things are their due. They know how to use the city bureaucracy and the courts to maximize their own advantages. They claim to want the same things we do, but they think of problems as objective social questions. The term 'objectivity' is a social index of class, not of knowledge. It describes how they deal with other people and who will do what to whom. We have less and are used to living in denser settings, so we have to get along with other people. Our attitude is live and let live; we are not as prone to play with other people and manipulate others' living situations. Because we emphasize personal relationships instead of thinking in abstractions, we are more aware of the consequences of change. For example, we realize that stores are social settings as well as businesses, and they mustn't be razed to the ground."

-- A Parcel 13 resident

"What can be seen might easily be construed as conflict of interest. Those things which have been done and are projected to be done ... immediately enhance or otherwise serve the private interests (and profit) of a few. Sidewalks,

street improvements, trees, alleys -- ALL MUCH NEEDED, cannot be deemed of greater importance than affordable housing. ... It really is a question of PRIORITIES. The PAC has it within its sphere of influence to promote the Fenway Area for the people who live here (even if they are tenants) or to promote it as a realtor's paradise."<sup>7</sup>.

#### Conflict explanation: economic interests

The Partisans explain local confrontations as a product of income differences among residents. It is thought that middle class people, especially property owners, have generally supported a renewal plan which has caused actual harm to the interests of the great majority of Fenway residents, who are low and moderate income tenants. Consciously or unconsciously, property owners will act to enhance the value of their own buildings and the marketability of all property in the area. But most tenants and small businesses need low rents if their very existence in the neighborhood is to continue. Partisans therefore believe that survival requires resistance to any forces which would alter the existing demographic composition of the area and contribute, intentionally or unintentionally, to the removal of current residents. Comfort and convenience are also important; present residents must not be oppressed by needlessly monumental new construction, obstructed in their capacity as shoppers, or restricted in their use of social services.

#### Motivation

The Partisans attribute the characteristics of the Citizens to "different perspectives based on life experience."<sup>8</sup> Objectivity, in other words, is thought to be limited by one's past and present cultural and economic environment, although some Partisans will also ascribe the

practices of the Citizens to deliberate malice.

### Priorities

Partisans classify the two systems of priorities as a contrast between physical planning and external beautification versus the broader economic and social objectives of the tenant advocates. Because the objectives of the Citizens are thought to be very like the BRA's, they are content, it is said, to chop a few stories off a contemplated high rise building and make minor revisions to official plans. They concentrate on tree planting, street improvements, traffic planning, and the control of anti-social activities and tend to close their eyes, as the Partisans see it, to the possibility of harmful consequences. Partisans, on the other hand, put "people ahead of sidewalks. A homeowner's concerns are bound to be different from a welfare mother on food stamps. If people were comfortable in their homes, then they'd care about trees."<sup>9</sup> Another danger, according to the Partisans, is that the desire for improvements can extend to improving the respectability of the populace by ridding the area of undesirable people. As one Partisan put it, "their way is to make bad things invisible. I don't like alkies and prostitutes around; but that's life, and I think it's politically important to see that stuff."<sup>10</sup>

### Manipulation

Partisans also complain that Citizens, like BRA planners, are so impatient for prompt results that they resist the democratic process of extended debate. To the Partisans, concern for the process of planning, as much as the final result, is in accordance with democratic ideals. "For them the imposition of a 'correct' plan would be O.K., but we would reject

even a 'correct' plan if it was imposed."<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, urban renewal planning in its very nature tends to be manipulative and elitist. The Citizens, because of similar background and education, are believed to share with professional planners an exaggerated respect for rationality and expertise. Because Citizens endorse the concept of dispassionate objectivity, they can, according to the Partisans, manipulate and rearrange things and people without guilt.

#### Objectivity

According to the Partisans, many Citizens are convinced of their superiority both in wisdom and specific knowledge. Because they are preoccupied with abstract notions ('options for use,' 'the implications of different densities'), they are said to be unable to imagine their way into the daily lives of representative citizens living and working in the area. This failure of empathy leads to what Partisans deem an insensitive analysis of social issues and inferior predictive powers. The Partisans, who think they have learned to recognize the limits of objectivity as the Citizens have not, believe themselves superior to their opponents in perspicacity and subtlety.

#### A sense of injury

"They treat you like a very insignificant pawn who they smile at and place somewhere else."

-- A Parcel 13 resident

"I don't know why it is, but to FenPAC we just don't cut the mustard. They have no grounds for what they say; it must be a class thing."

-- A FIG member

The reluctance of the Citizens to acknowledge the validity of Partisan



positions is extremely annoying to the Partisans. Some Partisans are hurt and angered by what they feel are the patronizing attitudes of both BRA and local professionals.

#### Strengths and weaknesses

Partisans see the Citizens as a permanent, homogeneous, and articulate body which functions effectively because they have limited objectives and superior professional and financial resources. Partisans see themselves as the underdogs. Lacking time, money, and fluency in the language of bureaucracy, they are, as they see it, in continual danger of burning themselves out in the struggle to meet goals which are not endorsed or supported by the wider society. Community organization is hampered by the transiency of the Partisans' putative constituency. In other Boston neighborhoods, ethnic identification acts as a cohesive force, but no ethnic group predominates in the Fenway, and the variety of ages, races, and life styles sometimes prevents recognition of common interests. Most of all, the Partisans believe that they are weaker of the two factions because their needs are greater. In their eyes, the very fact of underdog status lends legitimacy and moral force to the Partisan effort.

#### The Citizens' View

##### Conflict explanation: ill will of individuals

"Urban renewal is a way of working out personal antagonisms. I'm appalled at the shabby treatment they give each other. The conflict isn't based on issues; the issues here are fuzzy. I think they are really seeking support for their life styles. There's a lot of suspicion based on misinformation; they all get paranoid if information isn't furnished."

-- A Fenway employee

Some Citizens are at first reluctant to discuss community conflict or to classify contenders into two distinct factions. Unlike the Partisans, their explanation of conflict is usually based on individual peculiarities, rather than economic interests. One Citizen thinks "(1)t all comes down to individuals" and deplores the lack of communication between groups.<sup>12</sup> Lack of information and misunderstandings are often cited as contributing conditions.

#### Motivation

"The principle involved was a more practical one. FenPAC disposes of a budget of approximately \$35,000 per year. ... \$27,000 is authorized for salaries of staff personnel -- a prize worthy of considerable effort. ... (A) small but noisy clique might have controlled FenPAC and, incidentally, its budget. Alas, the voters looked the other way."<sup>13</sup>

Some citizens are baffled about the motives behind Partisan opposition; others believe that the desire for power, influence, and jobs is uppermost. For some Partisan persons, it is thought, the main concern is maintaining occupancy of cheap apartments, and the result is that narrow self-interest is placed above the good of both the Fenway and the city as a whole.

#### Undemocratic methods

- " ... (W)atch out for power hungry factions ... who ... refuse to risk the honest competition of total community life.
- " ... Fr. Case's idea of a good follower is one: 1) who criticizes the shape of urban renewal in the Fenway area; 2) who is angry because the Fenway Interagency Group slots when put to a total community democratic election fell short of target ... ; 3) who are young tenants.
- " The only time a homeowner is important is when a class action is the only way to go get what Fig wants ... ."<sup>14</sup>

Citizens feel they are subject to harrassment by the Partisans in the form of "marches, meeting crashes and meeting dragouts."<sup>15</sup> One PAC meeting

in the summer of 1974 lasted five hours, an event indelibly ingrained in the memory of the Citizens. Some complain that their productivity is hampered by pressure tactics and obstructionism. Some Partisans are seen as exhibitionist speech-makers, addicted to bickering and needless strife. Others are deemed as well-intentioned but uninformed idealists with prickly personalities and unrealistic goals. The Partisans are viewed by some Citizens as self-appointed representatives of only one segment of the population, not themselves unfortunate, but rather what one Citizen, a landlord, calls "the voluntary poor."

#### Self-image

The Citizens see themselves as competent, hard-working, judicious, and dispassionate, with a clear-sighted comprehension of the economic and political facts of life. They practise the art of the possible and refuse to tilt at windmills. In analysing proposals for development, for example, financial feasibility is a crucial question. "What's going to happen a few years down the pike?" a PAC member wants to know. "Is it going to fly?" The Citizens favor productivity and, with patient forbearance, wait out misguided attempts to prevent it. They endorse democratic policies; the PAC should be a sounding board for all varieties of public opinion. After all sides of an issue are freely expressed, differences should be settled in a spirit of consensus and compromise. "The idea was that rational man will approach rational man," as one PAC member wryly remarks.<sup>16</sup> The Citizens emphasize that many interests, both local and city-wide, are legitimate and therefore worthy of equal consideration. Unlike the Partisans, they refuse to rank interest groups according to degrees of need

for beneficent attention.

### Priorities

Citizens believe that the major task of the PAC is to engage in physical planning for a more attractive environment. Since this is a full-time job, the PAC cannot deal extensively with social issues without neglecting its proper function. Aesthetic considerations are of great importance; the PAC should evaluate proposed designs "for texture, scale, and compatible materials" in order to arrive at "more distinguished and satisfactory results" compared to pre-PAC construction.<sup>17</sup> It is equally important to maintain and upgrade the existing housing stock. Owner-occupancy of townhouses should be encouraged and apartment buildings brought up to code. For these purposes, banks should be encouraged to lend in the area. Also, since people spend a good part of their time out of doors, the condition of the streets is almost as important as the buildings themselves. Traffic planning and street and park improvements are crucial, not only for the image of the neighborhood, but also for the enhancement of outdoor life. The commercial market potential of the district must be surveyed and thoughtfully studied in order to bring new shops and restaurants to the neighborhood. Attractions such as the Christian Science Center, Symphony Hall, and the museums might well generate related commercial ventures, and, as one Citizen points out, a contingent of new and more affluent residents would help to support them. Finally, institutional plans must be reviewed and altered when detrimental to community objectives, and potential nuisances such as the proliferation of lodging houses and liquor licenses are to be discouraged.

### The future and the past

Most Citizens believe that every effort must be made to finish the Fenway Plan. Empty or dilapidated parcels must not be allowed to lie fallow. Delays, though often unavoidable, diminish morale and hasten deterioration. There is little cause to fear that present action will cause future harm; the bad effects of previous renewal planning on Fenway residents are thought to have been exaggerated. One citizen believes that "most displaced people were transients"<sup>18</sup>. and notes that the population has not decreased significantly. Relocation space is available, according to BRA reports, and payments are said to be generous. As for the loss of stores, one Citizen thinks that "the day of the small businessman is gone, over,"<sup>19</sup>. and another is amused that "young people have lately elevated storekeepers to sainthood" even though local merchants are just as profit-minded as Big Business.<sup>20</sup> One Citizen, after reminiscing about long-one establishments he once patronized and demolished buildings he once admired, remarks, as though to cast aside nostalgic impulses, that "the past is moot."<sup>21</sup> This attitude to the past would probably seem cavalier to many Partisans, for whom the planners' failure to keep past promises is at the root of current resistance to any luxury development, new or rehabilitated, residential or commercial.

### III. Commentary

#### Expedient planning

Fenway planners of the mid-sixties seem to have been motivated by a spirit of boosterism fortified by the ad-hoc opportunism which credits for institutional expansion plans encouraged. The germ theory of physical and social blight helped to provide a rationale. Speed and control were apparently of first importance. Boundary lines were dictated by expedient considerations -- to minimize opposition by excluding certain residential areas and to maximize credits by including all possible institutions. Curiosity was assuaged by vague and soothing language; detailed information might have led to embarrassing questions and time-consuming explanations. The Fenway Plan was devised at the top; there were no extensive consultations with representative people in order to bring their ideas to the surface, and the use of public funds to finance such projects was as unthinkable then as now.

#### Unforeseen consequences.

Planners did not expect that apparently permanent malfunctions would be a consequence of renewal, but losses of stores and low rent apartments were not easily made good. Implementation of the plan was poorly timed. If demolition had been delayed until just before construction, and if moderate income apartments had been built before the Church project and the Colonnade Hotel, organized resistance might have been forestalled. Delays caused by complex regulations and the court suit prolonged uncertainty on disposition parcels and encouraged disinvestment and deterioration. On adjacent streets the plan caused real estate speculation as well as in-

vestment. Building conditions have not improved overall; some are better, some worse.

For renewal opponents, it was not the Fenway neighborhood but the Fenway Plan which was diseased. In retrospect, resistance tactics were enough to delay completion of the plan until the state of the general economy was so undermined that neither the dreams of the boosters nor the goals of the activists could be realized. So far opponents seem to have succeeded in their purpose of preventing the neighborhood from becoming a fashionable high rent district, but they cannot by themselves repair the ravages of previous demolition or meet the needs of the non-affluent population for housing, stores, and social services.

#### Two images of urbanity

Another effect of the plan was the polarization of many local residents into two factions, divided on the issue of how to rank their common objectives. But beyond the apparently similar goals and language there seem to be two different visions of urbanity, in which aesthetic and social considerations are intertwined. Everybody favors cleanliness and beauty, and both sides say they want to encourage stability, diversity, and liveliness. Stability means less transiency, but what people are to be stabilized? Which is the class or income group which can safely be left to its own devices? For a Partisan stability means that existing residents remain in low-cost apartments. For a Citizen stability means attracting a number of stable residents into improved housing. Diversity means a mixture of races, ethnic groups, ages, and life styles, and both factions agree that more families are needed. But Partisans would increase the

proportion of minority people, whereas Citizens would tend to spice up the pot by importing some higher-income residents. Liveliness means the presence of people on the streets and in the shops, the theatrical experience provided by their comings and goings, and the social contact such activity fosters. According to a FenPAC Citizen, "People have an aesthetic purpose." A Partisan would probably concede that people are an ornament to public places but would criticize the statement as a reprehensible case of misplaced emphasis and an amusing instance of the typical Citizen attitude. Since beauty, for Partisans, is in the eye of the beholder, they would doubt that Citizens could find all people equally decorative.

There are also different aesthetic standards for purely physical forms. Partisans seem to be more tolerant of clutter, crudity, and raffish appearances. A scene acceptable to a Partisan might be too chaotic for Citizen tastes, and an example for Citizens of visual serenity might seem inflexible and formal to the Partisans. Is the plaza full or empty? Should it be planted with geraniums and begonias or with corn and tomatoes for the Food Co-op? Should playgrounds be built of found objects or furnished with manufactured equipment? Should the parking lot on Parcel 13 have a paved park with a fountain or an above-ground swimming pool? What standards should apply for sign controls, and, for that matter, is this issue of any importance?

Across the Charles River in Cambridge, a short bus ride away, are Harvard and Central Squares. Both are shopping districts where liveliness and diversity are equal in quantity, but different in quality. Although there is a little of each in the other, people, clothes, and conversations differ as much as the signs and window dressings, and the food and mer-



chandise inside. Harvard Square, in short, is smart; Central Square is tacky. Which urban image should the Fenway emulate?

Differences of the sort described are exacerbated by competition for resources in conditions of scarcity. Since coping with the unforeseen results of past planning in a time of economic stagnation has been a chastening experience for both sides, factionalism would probably be alleviated in the unlikely event of future abundance. Public largesse, restored to past levels, would sweeten the gloomy air of resentment, and, in a more buoyant atmosphere, a merged image of urbanity might develop.

## Part Four -- The Prospects for Parcel 13

### I. A Narrative of Events

#### Designating the Developer

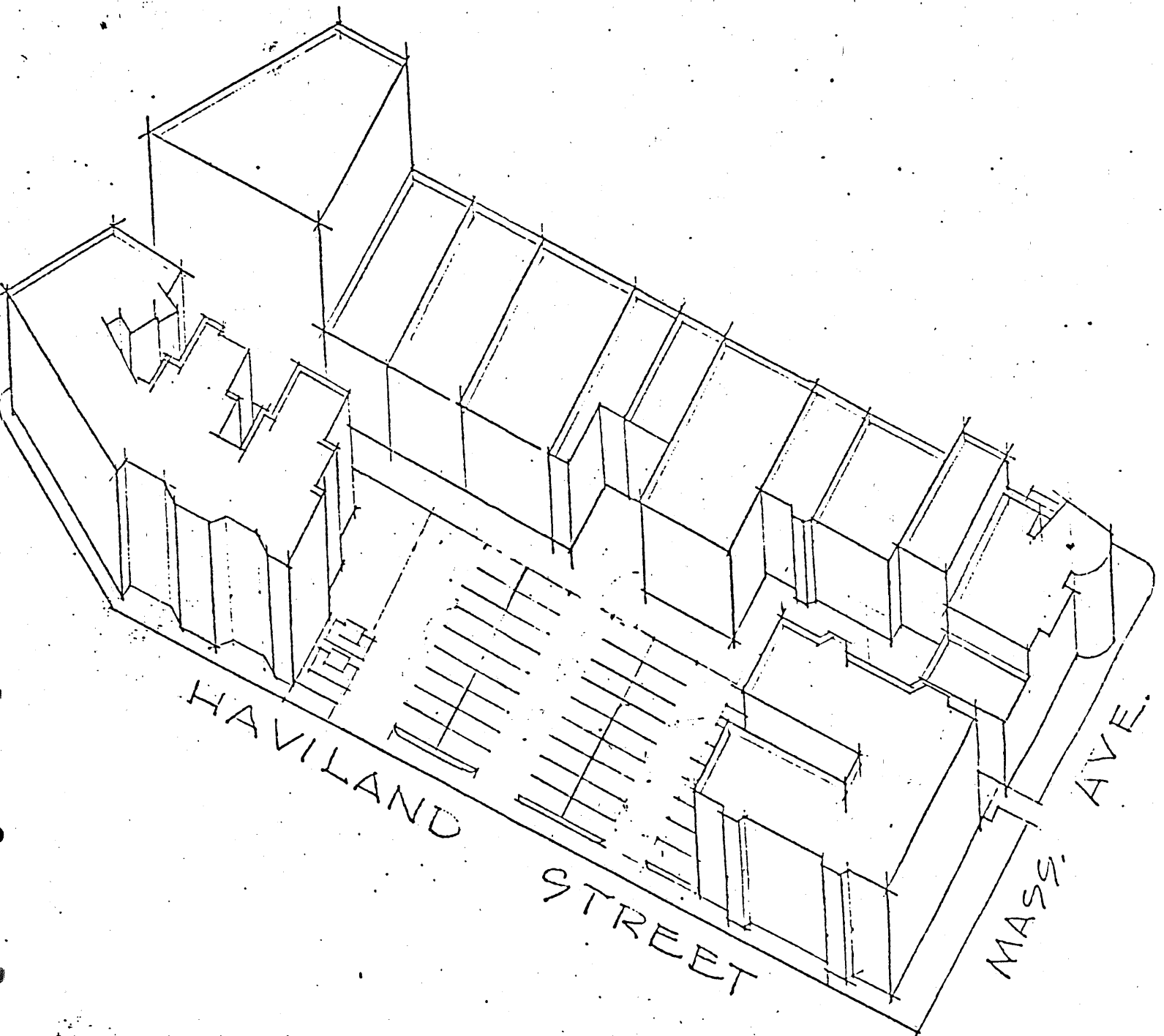
On July 20th, 1972 Robert LaCentra received tentative designation from the BRA as the redeveloper of Parcel 13. His proposal was for a 28 story building with 376 apartments, insured under the Federal 220 Program for market rental housing. In the mid-fifties LaCentra owned only a plumbing firm and the building in which it was located. At the Whitney Street Project about a mile west of the Fenway he had a contract for maintenance work on BRA acquired buildings destined for demolition. His first substantial opportunity came when he was selected by the BRA as developer of Back Bay Manor, one of three high rise, high rent apartment buildings which eventually arose at Whitney St. LaCentra negotiated a tax arrangement with the city for payments of 15 percent of gross income yearly. The mortgage of \$6M was for forty years at 6 percent. The land under Back Bay Manor was leased from the city for \$5300 a year and may be purchased for fifty thousand dollars when the property is fully amortized. LaCentra's previous development experience, prior to the Parcel 13 designation, also included Neptune Towers (1971) in Lynn.<sup>1</sup>

#### Resistance Begins

No further progress on Boylston Towers had occurred when, in March of 1973, the injunction of the Jones versus Lynn case brought work on the Fenway Plan to a temporary halt. At this time the scheduled demolition of Church-owned property on Massachusetts Avenue was a more imminent danger. Nonetheless, several Parcel 13 residents made inquiries about

# PARCEL 13

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the plan for the block and interviewed both residents and storekeepers about their opinions of Fenway renewal in general and the plans for Parcel 13 and the adjacent Parcel 12 in particular. Residents were angered that an engineering firm had taken soundings at the site despite the court injunction.

The out-of-court settlement of the Jones versus Lynn case in May of 1974 was a disappointment to Parcel 13 Partisans. The terms of the stipulation and agreement, specifically excluded Parcel 13 from any of the restrictions on height and rent levels devised for other disposition parcels.<sup>2</sup> There now seemed to be no obstacle to Boylston Towers other than neighborhood resistance, publicity, and pressure on both FenPAC and the BRA. The Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee was formed by several tenants, and residents, businesses, and employees on the block were urged to join. Over the summer a stand was set up at the Stop and Shop, and mimeographed leaflets describing the proposed building and the harm it would do to local interests were handed out. Later in the year there was a bake sale for the benefit of the Committee. Some Partisans, in the belief that demolition would begin in the fall, were considering the possibility of physical resistance.<sup>3</sup>

The alarm of residents increased when they heard that property owners had received auditing forms for a BRA survey. In August the BRA confirmed that construction was expected in 1975.<sup>4</sup> No pictures or models were available at either the site or City Hall offices of the BRA. Residents knew only the size of the building, that space was allotted for a health club and ground floor commercial space, and that Haviland Street would be widened, with a garage opposite the day care and community health

centers.

On November 7, 1974, in the basement of St. Anne's Church, a large meeting was held with city officials on the question of how to use the local share of Community Development Block Grant funds. The consensus was that money should be spent on moderate and low rent apartments and on rehabilitation of existing housing. Parcel 13 was specifically mentioned as an example of the sort of redevelopment that was not wanted. FenPAC devised a questionnaire on the subject of neighborhood priorities, and when results were summarized, Parcel 13 development received the low ranking of number six out of seven disposition parcels. But renewal opponents doubted that the Neighborhood Development Council, composed of city officials appointed by the mayor, would accept community priorities. Their hope was that the new order of things in Washington would bankrupt the BRA. When the so-called Neighborhood Improvement Program budget was published, it was revealed that the BRA had well over \$6,000,000 to spend in the Fenway. Of this amount the largest single item was \$1,333,400 for the acquisition of Parcel 13. Rumors about an early project close-out added to the fear that time was running out.

#### The Gift of the Fenway Club

The death of Mr. Leeder, a partner of the Gorin & Leeder real estate company, prompted the offer of the Fenway Club to the BRA in lieu of about \$50,000 in unpaid property taxes. The transaction was hastily arranged because agreement had to be completed before the end of the year to save on federal taxes. The BRA was to acquire a half interest in the property immediately and the other half the following summer.

FenPAC members were at first disturbed that they had been given only two days notice that the gift was scheduled for discussion at a BRA board meeting, when procedural regulations required fifteen days notice. The PAC voted unanimously to remove this topic from the board agenda and called an emergency meeting for Saturday, December 21.<sup>5</sup>

Fenway Club tenants and area residents attended the Saturday meeting. Fenway Project Director Joseph Berlandi assured everyone that the building would not be emptied and demolished until construction time and that proper management and maintenance would be provided. The Fenway Club, it was said, was surely profitable; these profits would not be transferred to other renewal projects and would probably be applied to reduce tenants' rents or to bring the property up to code. Berlandi also said that although the market value of the Club was \$294,000, LaCentra would not benefit from the donation because Parcel disposition prices depended, not on acquisition costs, but on the nature of new development. He emphasized that the Club was "a very significant property in respect to the overall parcel, the single largest property within that parcel. I don't think any other would cost this much money."

Nonetheless Berlandi denied that the acquisition would further LaCentra's plans, which could "change drastically." Property acquisition, in any case, was a necessary prelude to any kind of action, including rehabilitation. In Berlandi's opinion, LaCentra's original proposal was no longer feasible since construction costs and interest rates had risen during the lapse in activity brought about by litigation. He told a worried Club resident that relocation would not occur until a year after approval of a plan for the Parcel and that another proposal

might have to be devised because of changing economic conditions.

Bob Case of FIG protested that approval of the transfer would associate the PAC with LaCentra's proposal, which he called the "most abhorrent" to the community of all parcel projects. Karla Rideout of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee requested that the PAC revoke the developer's designation as a condition for BRA acceptance of the property. But PAC members assured the audience that LaCentra had no "inside track" with the committee. LaCentra, they said, had failed to respond to PAC inquiries about his intentions. Linking acquisition of the Club to Parcel designation was like "mixing apples and oranges." PAC members after this lengthy discussion recommended continued good management and maintenance and retention of any profits within the Fenway Project, and made no further objections to the Fenway Club transaction. Parcel activists were not consoled by these assurances, and the statement that some other property owners had requested early acquisition of their buildings added to the Partisans' alarm.<sup>6</sup>

#### The PAC Rejects Boylston Towers

In January of 1975 Robert LaCentra presented preliminary sketches for two versions of Boylston Towers, which was to have 358 one, two, and three bedroom apartments in a twelve story building on Boylston Street and either 25 or 36 stories on Massachusetts Avenue. The main entrance was to be at the Massachusetts Avenue end of Boylston Street. On Havi-land Street would be a one-story building with a roof-top swimming pool, service ramps, and access to 286 car underground garage. The plan also called for a top floor restaurant, a health club, and 38,500 square feet

of commercial space. Rents were to start at \$375 for a one bedroom apartment.<sup>7</sup> These plans were presented to BRA employees and several PAC members at a meeting to which no Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee members or other community organizations were invited.

In accordance with the recommendations of architectural consultant Ralph Bennett the PAC voted on February 11 to reject the Boylston Towers plan as unacceptable. The grounds for rejection were that the new buildings did not meet the general design objectives specified in the developer's kit. There was no provision for public open space, commercial space was excessive and badly located, the floor-to-area ratio of 8 was too large, and the scale, height, and cornice lines of the new buildings did not respond "to the scales and intricacies of the immediate neighborhood."<sup>8</sup> Another recommendation was that the design objectives of the developer's kit itself should be altered. Commercial space should be reduced and the floor-to-area ratio held to 5.5. Open space facing Edgerly Road should be mandatory. More detailed drawings and models should be required which would demonstrate the relationship of the new buildings to the surrounding area.

#### The FenPAC Studies

The PAC also arranged for three separate studies of Parcel 13. The urban design firm of Blurock & O'Hara was hired to study the relationship of Parcels 12 and 13 to the surrounding streets and to prepare a report to help the PAC evaluate future proposals for the two sites. Under the supervision of Ralph Bennett and their instructors, students at the Boston Architectural Center would design a set of development alternatives for



Parcel 13, with models and illustrations of the various options, including both rehabilitation and new construction. The FenPAC staff would conduct a physical and demographic survey of the Parcel.

Because these actions would delay development, the Partisans were pleased. But since LaCentra was thought to have political influence, fears were expressed that, in concert with the BRA, he might force the project through even in the face of PAC disapproval. The Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee also thought that the PAC would eventually approve an aesthetically pleasing plan which was economically and socially inimicable to local interests. Those opposed to Boylston Towers hoped that LaCentra would be unwilling to comply with newly devised guidelines. The PAC response to the project was also considered a test of the BRA's good will and capacity for cooperation with the local body.

The Parcel 13 survey conducted by the FenPAC staff was ready by the end of March. The residential summary included the number, ages, income, occupation, length of tenancy, and relocation attitudes of Parcel tenants. Between 121 and 131 of the 143 residents were queried on these topics. It was estimated that  $44 \frac{3}{4}$  percent of the residents could be placed in a hardship category because of old age or unemployment. The apartment survey counted the number, sizes, and rents of the units and included a very brief description of the features and conditions of each building. The commercial survey described the businesses, including the square footage, rent, length of tenancy, number of employees, means of employee transportation, and source of patronage of each business. There was also a traffic count for the intersection of Boylston Street and Massachusetts Avenue, and the appearance of various floor-to-area ratios was

illustrated. A survey of high rise buildings comparable to Boylston Towers covered rents, square footage, the mix of bedroom sizes, the amount and size of commercial spaces, and vacancy rates. Five options ranging from zero to total demolition were presented. For the two options which called for a mix of rehabilitation and new construction, the Parkgate and Alex buildings on the Haviland-Hemenway corner were retained in both cases, with a choice of saving either the Fenway Club or the Werman property on Massachusetts Avenue.

On April 7 the urban design consultants, Tom Blurock and Jim O'Hara, presented a slide show which illustrated some preliminary findings. The neighborhood was said to be distinguished for the harmonious horizontal variations in height, trim, and cornice lines of the rows of older apartment buildings. The designers had special praise for the "vertical modulations" formed by angular facades and long windows, features which were absent in Church Park and Morville House. The saliency of Massachusetts Avenue was emphasized, and the "lack of definition" caused by the gap at the Massachusetts Turnpike was deplored. The intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street at Parcel 13 was a potential gateway to downtown; but since the 'high spine' of skyscrapers stopped at the Prudential Center, there was no aesthetic obligation to erect a high rise building on that corner. An open space on the Haviland Street side of the Parcel with a walkway through the block to Boylston Street would reinforce the park and pedestrian activity of Edgerly Road. PAC members found the presentation absorbing.

The BRA Task Force

In March Fenway Project Director Joseph Berlandi promised to establish a BRA Task Force which would "re-examine the objectives for Parcels 13 and 12" to supplement the work of the PAC and its consultants. Berlandi declared that BRA Director Robert Kenney was happy with FenPAC's response. Berlandi hoped that a solution favorable to all interests, including the developer, could be arranged.<sup>9</sup> The Task Force was to be composed of several BRA planners and PAC members Anne Gulo and Robert Walcott. Eventually added to the group were three members of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee, Mike Silver, owner of the Back Bay Pharmacy, Estelle Gorman, resident manager of the Fenway Club, and John Newby, a Partisan member of the PAC.

By the time of the PAC meeting of April 22, three Parcel 13 buildings had been examined and pronounced structurally sound. The Task Force had prepared a data summary of residential and commercial characteristics and five development options. Drawings were distributed that illustrated the massing effect of different floor-to-area ratios. In response to questions from the floor, Larry Koff, Task Force coordinator, reassured the audience that relocation places were available. Koff also stated that local service stores and restaurants would be suitable for the site but that artists, the flute shop, the cabinet maker, the Karate studio, the pool hall, and the ballet school would be unable to afford either new or rehabilitated space. Partisans protested that this statement proved that the Task Force was operating under preconceptions and was, in fact, selecting uses for preconceived spaces. One spectator called for "an inside-out approach" to designing space to suit the needs of existing businesses and residents. A Parcel 13 resident suggested starting with

the assumption that "everybody stays." Another suggested a cooperative form of local ownership.

The impression that only the new construction options would be seriously considered was fortified when Phil Caruso, BRA traffic planner, presented an update of the two-phase project for widening Massachusetts Avenue from Columbus Avenue to Newbury Street. If the project were to be completed, the demolition of the buildings fronting Massachusetts Avenue on both Parcels 12 and 13 would be required. Said to be essential to the traffic plan was the provision for a left turn onto Boylston Street for cars northbound on Massachusetts Avenue. But because Symphony Hall, Horticultural Hall, and the Back Bay cannot be eliminated by even the most enthusiastic advocates of auto access, Massachusetts Avenue would be unalterable squeezed at these points. For Partisans, demolition of Parcels 12 and 13 was much too great a price to pay for the very uncertain prospect of significant improvements in traffic flow.<sup>10</sup>

On May 23, the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee sent a letter to BRA Director Robert Kenney on its newly designed stationary. It was signed by Karla Rideout, the Committee chairperson, Mike Silver, and John Newby. A list of thirty members of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee was appended. The letter made five requests: that development conform to "existing uses" and result in "affordable rents by all current residential and commercial tenants," that the "choice of a traffic plan ... be subordinated to the needs and facilities adherent in the final development plan for Parcel 13," that there be no "outstanding commitment to any developer," and that the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee "approve the final selection

of the developer." If these guidelines were not accepted by the Task Force, the letter said, the group would be "obliged to oppose its recommendations."

In June Kenney replied to these demands. He urged the Committee to "be more constructive by working with the Task Force and submitting your back-up data and viewpoint in support of this option ... rather than announcing your opposition to a recommendation before one has even been reached." Rehabilitation was "one of the options currently being studied."<sup>11</sup>

Since the Parcel residents were amateurs without the time or resources to furnish a feasible proposal, they resented Kenney's challenge to make the case for their own plan. The Task Force estimate of \$ 4,000,000 in rehabilitation costs was met with skepticism. Partisans felt that 'gut rehab' was unnecessary and that much could be accomplished at less expense. But with new construction almost a foregone conclusion, no effective professional assistance could be expected from BRA planners. Under the circumstances attendance at the Task Force was a "charade of participation." By summertime the PAC was usually represented only by staff members, and when Mrs. Gorman resigned as Fenway Club manager, no other Parcel resident replaced her.

#### Conclusion of the PAC Studies

##### Staff summary

On July 8 a FenPAC meeting at the Boston Architectural Center was devoted almost entirely to Parcel 13 studies. Rick Bohn, PAC administrator, first presented a summary based on the findings of the staff Parcel survey. Low personal incomes made relocation a hardship for many residents. Elderly

tenants could probably be moved to more spacious and subsidized apartments scheduled for construction on Parcels 5 and 9. "What will be lost ... will be the opportunity to live communally. Such arrangements, while sometimes labeled 'substandard,' do offer close social contact and ... mutual interdependency usually lacking in large scale Senior Citizen developments." The summary didn't estimate the availability of multi-bedroom, low income apartments for relocation of younger residents.

Relocation of businesses was an especially severe problem. Average Parcel rents were \$3.30 a square foot a year, about one-third the rate charged at Church Park. There was virtually no relocation space available at reasonable rates in the East Fenway. Businesses related to performing and graphic arts paid the lowest rents and would "most likely ... be permanently forced out of the area."

The summary also stated that "many high bedroom count, low rental apartments were demolished as part of the Fenway Urban Renewal Plan." There had been a loss of low and moderate rental units and a net gain of 354 middle to high income units. "Completion of the ... plan ... would result in the total production" of about 1050 low and moderate income units, almost all studio and one bedroom, and of these about 86 percent would be "either exclusively reserved, or held in first priority, for Senior Citizens. ... It is against this background that the existing stock on Parcel 13 can be assessed. ... (I)ts buildings are currently a source of the very types of units that are now and will continue to be in shortest supply. ... It is highly unlikely that this type of high bedroom count, low-rise apartments would ever be produced by new construction in the site area at any rent levels."

The summary report questioned the need and demand for high income units. Because very few Fenway residents could afford Boylston Towers, "the project would have to ... compete successfully with other more fashionable areas of the city." The report enumerated existing vacancies in two comparable nearby projects and cited the case of the foreclosure at 12 Stoneholm Street, a one-time garage converted to 120 high rent apartments. "Since its inception, the project has been plagued by high vacancy and problem tenants." ('Problem tenants,' on this case, means pimps, prostitutes, and drug dealers.) Also noted was the competition from condominium conversions, two apartment towers under construction at Charles River Park, and about 400 market rental units which might be built on Fenway Parcels 3 and 12.

Bohn emphasized the dangers to the neighborhood of overestimating the profit potential of Boylston Towers. If the developer backed out after final designation, there might be yet another empty lot in the Fenway. If construction did occur, high vacancy rates might tempt the management to lower its standards for tenant selection and maintenance. A project with a poor image and financial difficulties would discourage investors from future lending in the area.

On the issue of social compatibility the summary concluded "that the current population is economically and socially well integrated into the surrounding community. ... The office staff could find no indication and heard no reports of severe alcoholism, prostitution, or trafficking in drugs occurring among residents of the site. By these commonly applied social criteria the Parcel is not 'blighted.'" The report cited a 1974 report on Boston high rise luxury apartments prepared by the BRA and the

Harvard-MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies and predicted that if the Boylston Towers tenants were like those in comparable projects, median household income would rise to over \$18,000 a year, the proportion of residents thirty to fifty years old would increase, few new residents would come from the Fenway, and fifty percent would move in from areas outside of Boston. The summary also cited the conclusion of the same report that "high rise luxury apartments tend to appear as fortresses, constructed in such a way as to shelter the people inside from involvement with the neighborhood" and predicted that "(b)ecause of their income levels and lack of familiarity with the neighborhood, these residents would not be integrated into the fabric of the community nearly to the degree that the previous residents were. Higher incomes and increased mobility will enable these residents to purchase goods and services at a city-wide, and in the case of ... leisure activities even at a region-wide, scale."

The PAC staff summary concluded by listing five options for use of the Parcel. The 'do nothing' option would be the worst since its only advantage lay in delaying action in the hope that future changes in government programs would make feasible a development plan which would meet community needs. Postponing development would encourage further disinvestment and deterioration. To avoid this, the BRA could renounce any interest in the site as a renewal parcel and rid itself of the properties the agency had acquired. But Parcel 13 would then pass into the open market, and new investment, whether by new or present owners, would eventually cause considerable increases in both residential and commercial rents.

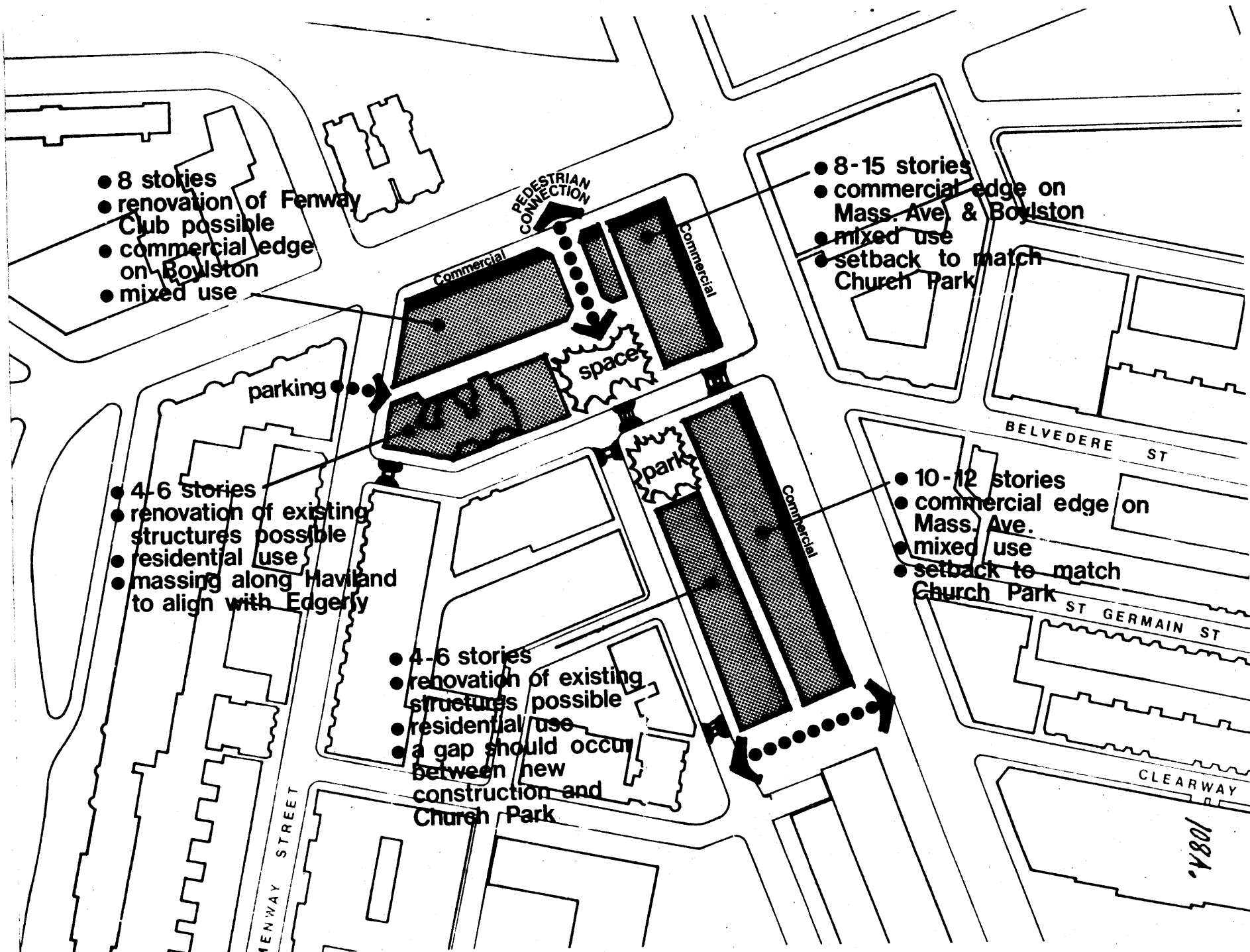


Two other options were also disparaged. Total rehabilitation would be harder to finance than new construction and would also prevent the widening of Massachusetts Avenue. High rise construction would provide "a more sanitized, if characterless and monotonized image for the site" but otherwise offered "the community more costs than benefits."

Two options were recommended. A mixture of rehabilitation and new construction would provide for "the retention of the site's visual and psychological values," ... "a measure of design flexibility," and a wide range of rent levels. The option for new construction under twelve stories would mean even "more design flexibility," and development procedures would be easier to organize.<sup>12.</sup>

#### Urban design study -- final results

Then Tom Blurock and Jim O'Hara, the urban design study team presented a slide show illustrating the visual characteristics of the streets surrounding Parcel 13. This collection of observations was similar to, but more thorough than, the presentation to the PAC proposal analysis meeting of April 7. They concluded that low rise buildings were suitable for Hemenway and Haviland Streets and Edgerly Road and that rehabilitation of the existing buildings at these locations might be desirable. New construction on Massachusetts Avenue should be ten to twelve stories and, on Boylston Street, eight stories. These heights would harmonize with the cornice lines of existing buildings. The designers emphasized that "(f)acades should be designed with a finely textured balance of horizontals and verticals" and "surface texture should be compatible with existing structures and spaces." Also recommended was a new park with a



Recommendations of PAC Design Study

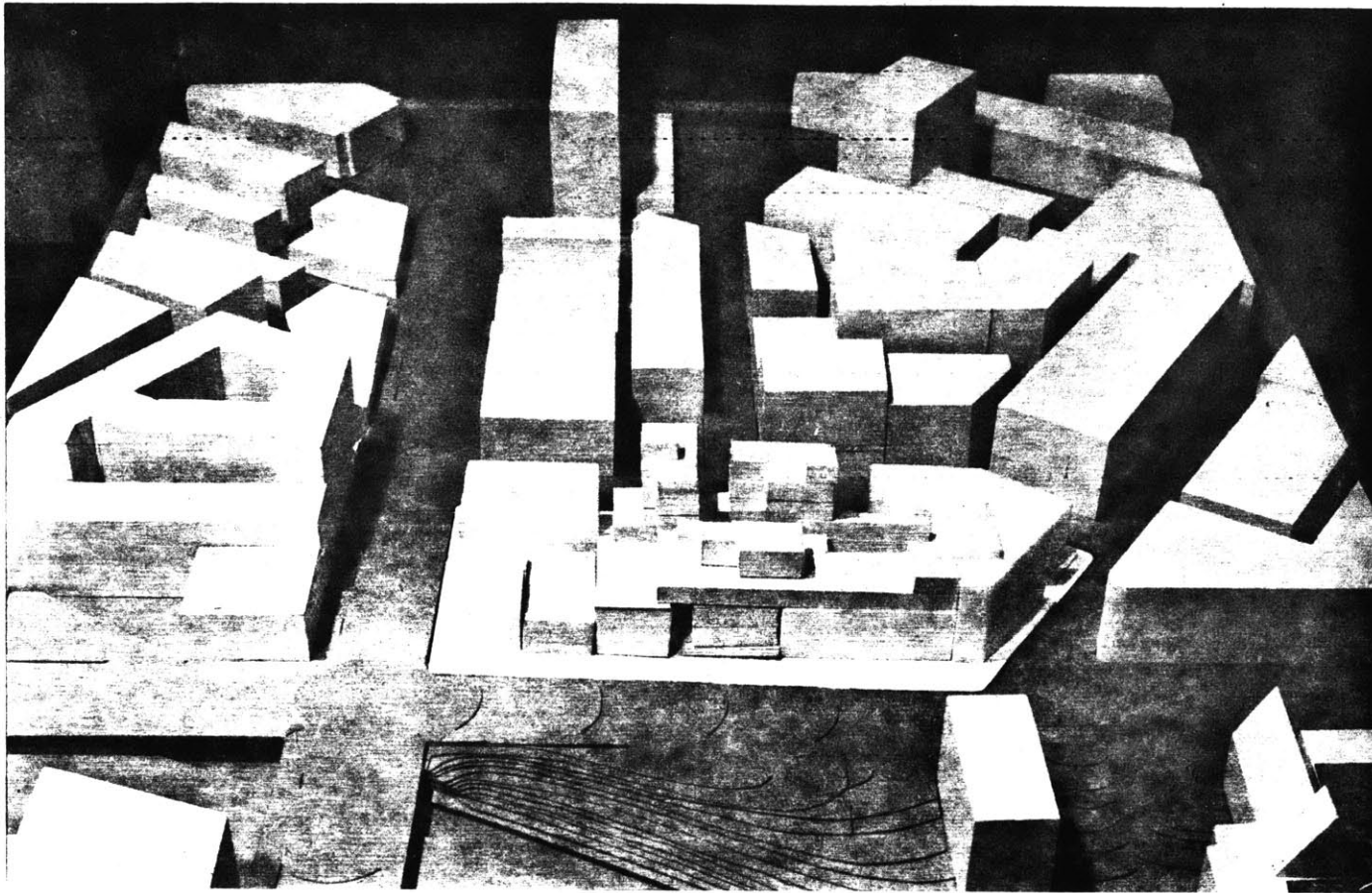
pedestrian passway bisecting Parcel 13 and another passway to Massachusetts Avenue between Church Park and Parcel 12.<sup>13.</sup>

#### The BAC models

Ralph Bennett, architectural consultant and supervisor of the PAC studies, reviewed five different models for future development, devised as a class exercise by Boston Architectural Center students and based on the design study guidelines. The first model, and the only version which was to be of interest to Parcel 13 activists, was prepared by Jim Wetzel. It called for the rehabilitation of all existing buildings with new construction at the parking lot and on top of the Boylston Street buildings, step-down fashion, from the seven-story Fenway Club to the Unicorn. This plan also featured a glass-roofed walkway which would open up commercial space to the interior of the parcel at both street and second-story levels. The second and third models called for the rehabilitation of the Fenway Club and of the Portnoy and Alex buildings on the southwest corner of the site, with new construction at recommended heights along Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street. The fourth proposal was for all new construction with bay-windowed street facades and balconies facing south to Havi-land Street. The fifth version was also for new construction. In this instance only, the recommended pedestrian passageway slanted from Edgerly Road to a triangular open space at the corner of Boylston Street and Massachusetts Avenue.<sup>14.</sup>

#### Bennett's summary

In conclusion Ralph Bennett presented nine recommendations. Commercial space was not to exceed 20,000 square feet, and stores should not

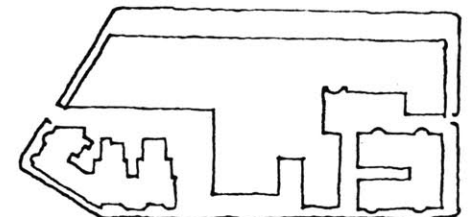


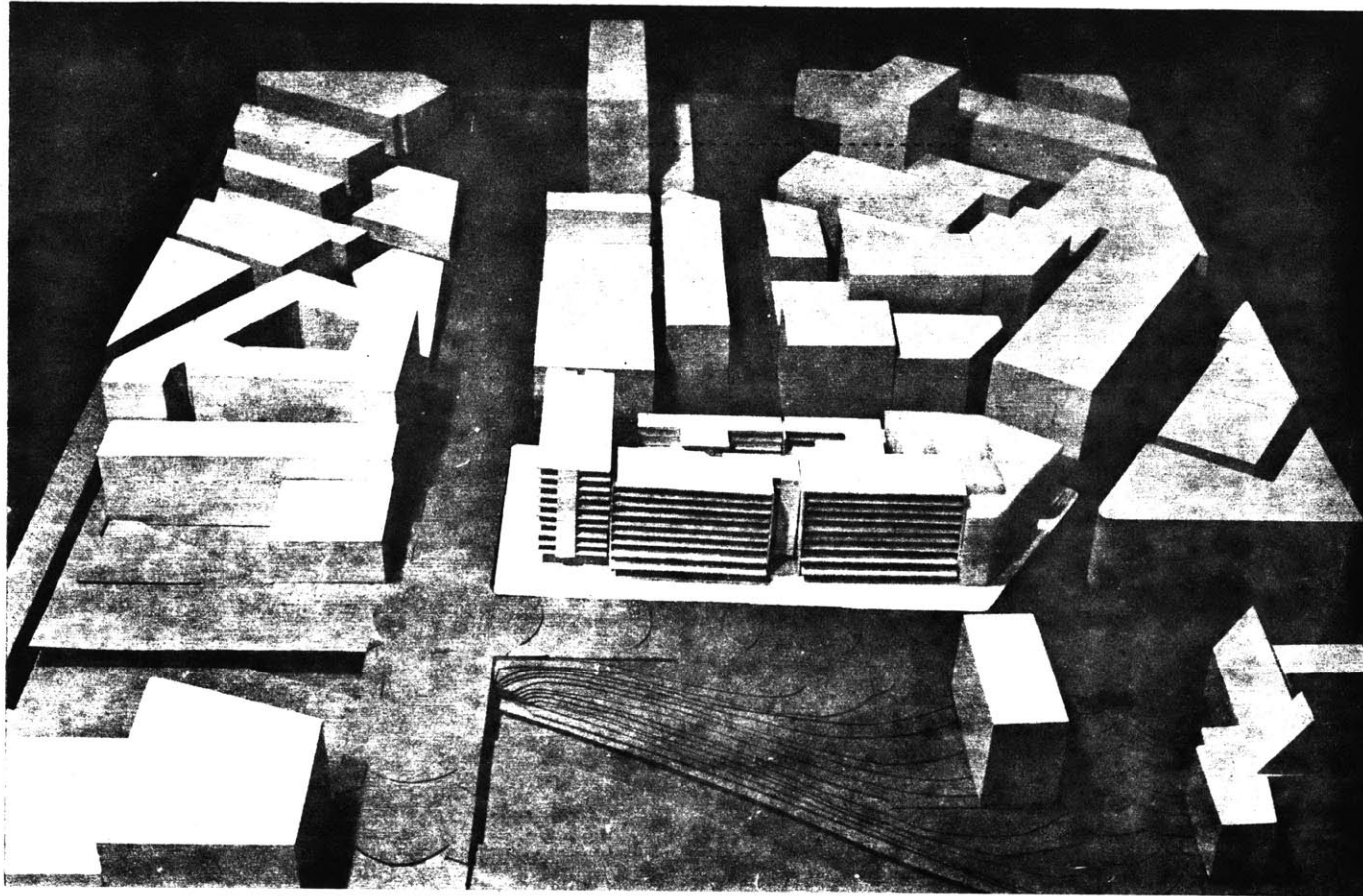
This proposal assumes complete, possibly staged, rehabilitation of all buildings on the parcel. A few large commercial tenants in the renovated space together with a magnet use (theatre, etc.) in the new construction over the existing parking. Passageways would be opened into the middle of the site from Boylston and Haviland Streets and Massachusetts Avenue.

Jim Wetzel  
Instructor: Peter Papesch

109A.

F.A.R. gross	F.A.R. less Pkg.	Retail/ Commercial	Pkg. Spaces	Dwelling Units	Ldg. Rms.	Eff.	1BR	2BR	3BR
4.3	4.12	112,000	13	200 (estimated)					



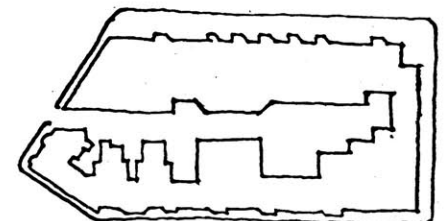


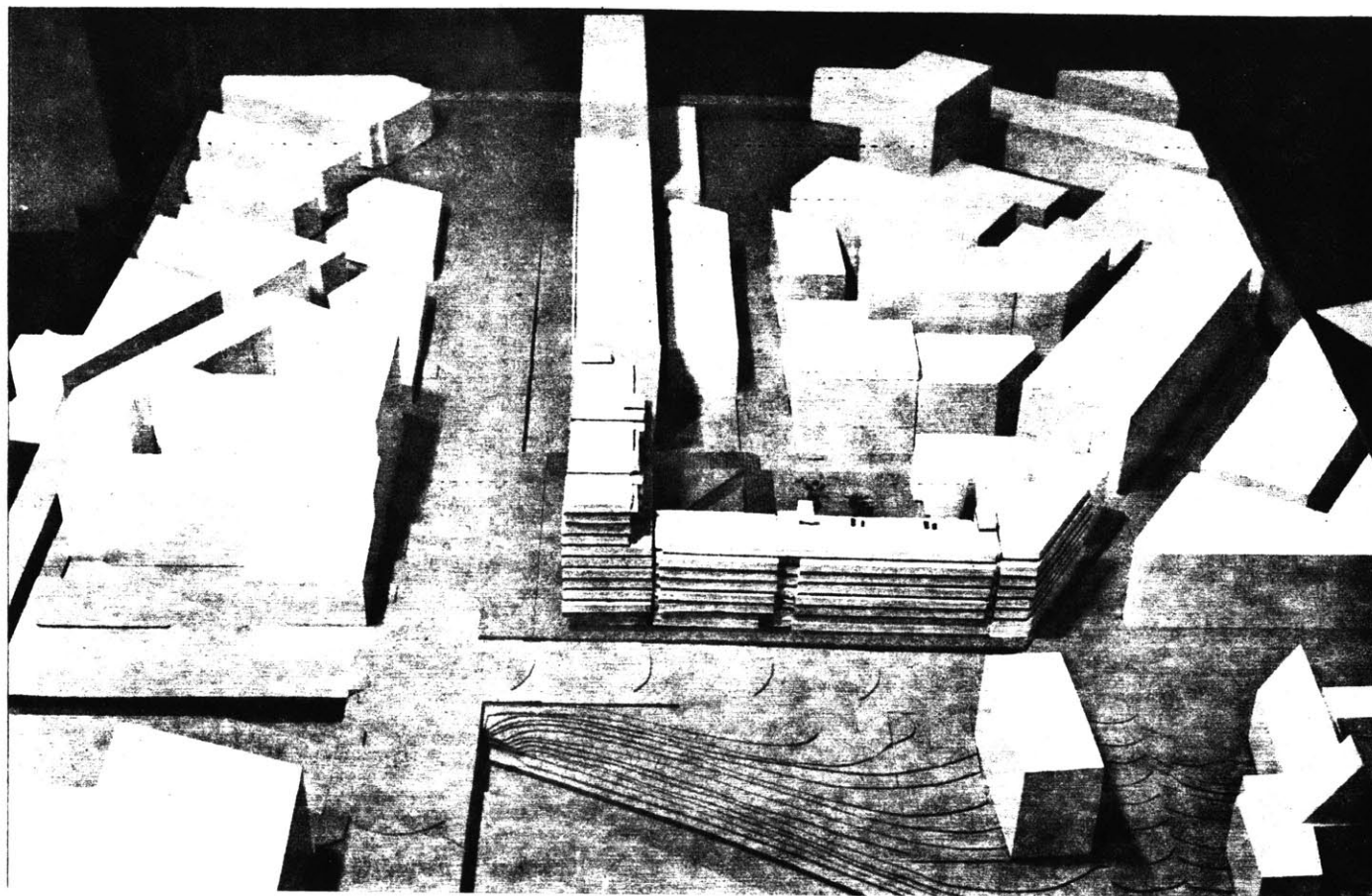
This scheme retains the housing uses at the west end of the site, and replaces the remainder of the block in stages. The final development encloses a public open space at the end of Edgerly Road to which access can be gained from Haviland Street and the intersection of Boyston Street and Massachusetts Avenue.

Rick Gibson  
Instructor: Mike Ertel

1978.

F.A.R. gross	F.A.R. less Pkg.	Retail/ Commercial	Pkg. Spaces	Dwelling Units	Ldg. Rms.	Eff.	1BR	2BR	3BR
5.2	4.0	21,600	235	387	60	55	149	123	-



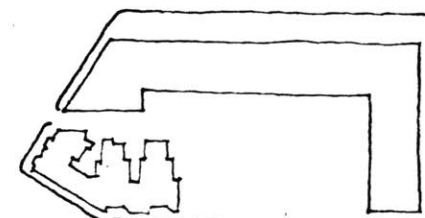


The west end of the site is rehabilitated in this project; new construction at the maximum suggested heights is provided along Boylston Street and Massachusetts Avenue. A large, mostly public open space results on the south side of the site allowing passage from Edgerly Road to Boylston Street.

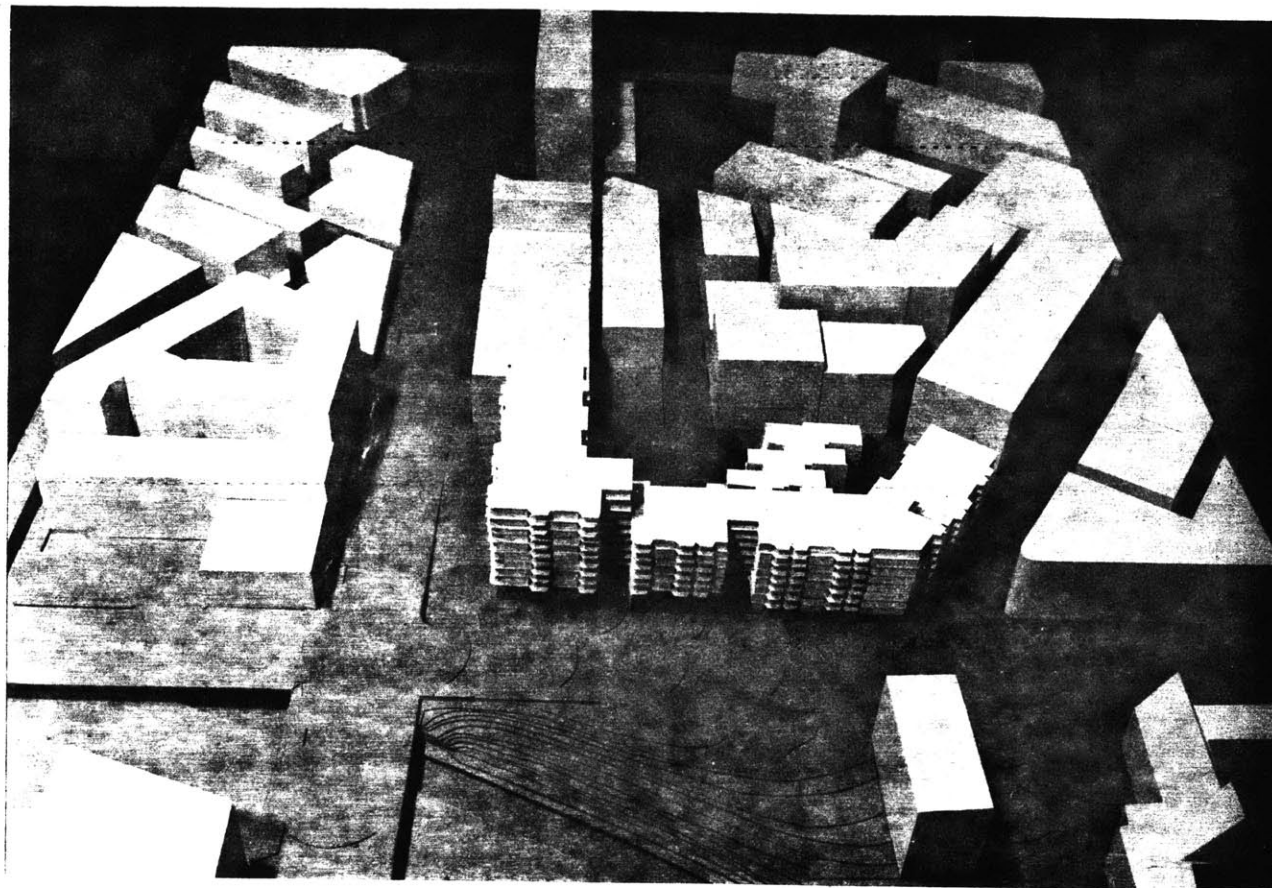
Roger Winkle  
Instructor: Peter Papesch

109C.

F.A.R. gross	F.A.R. less Pkg.	Retail/ Commercial	Pkg. Spaces	Dwelling Units	Ldg. Rms.	Eff.	1BR	2BR	3BR
6.3	4.7	47,000	230	220	60	2	124	26	8





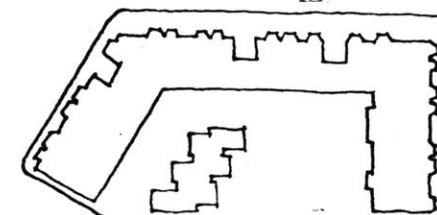


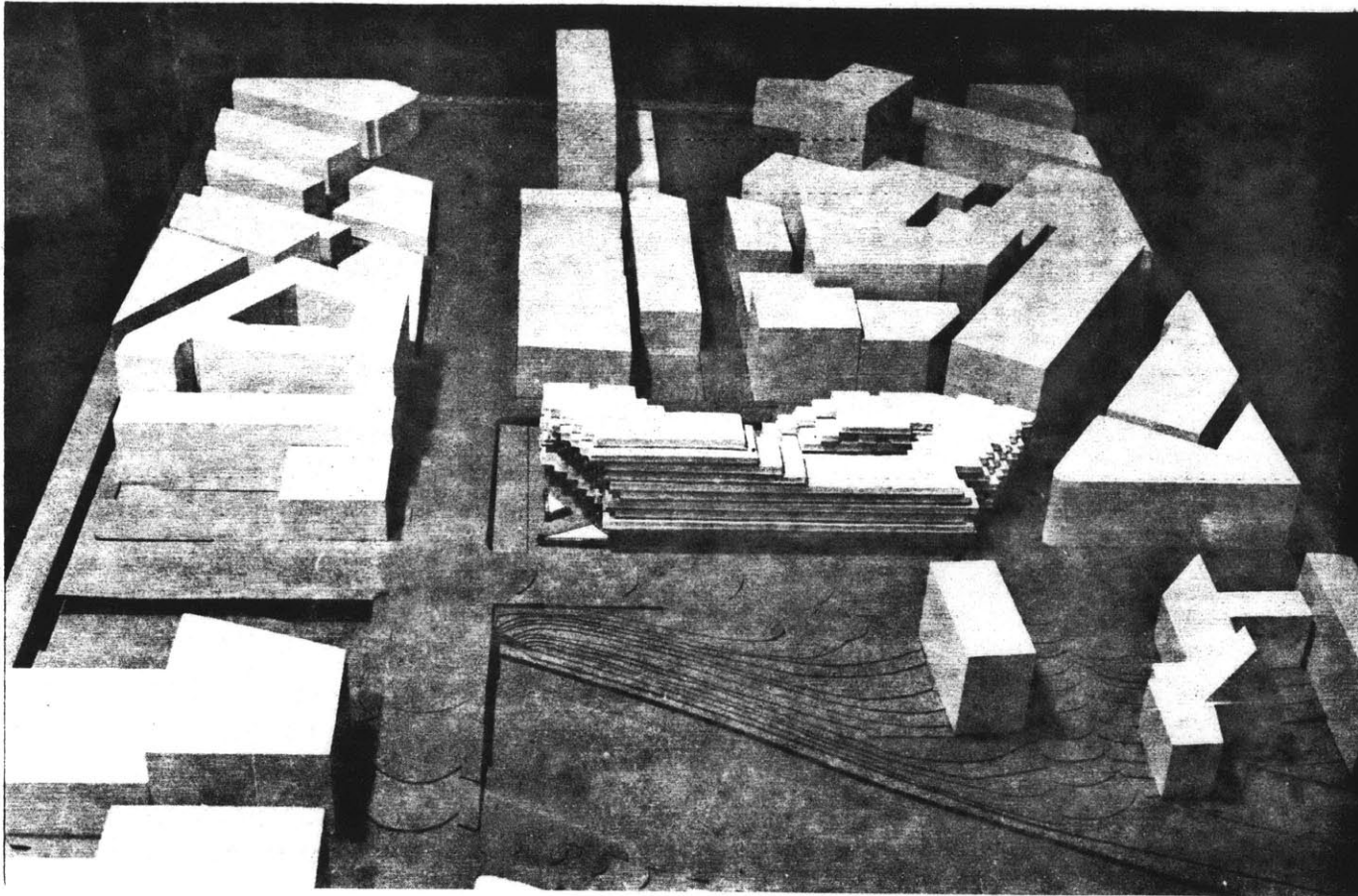
This scheme proposes new construction for the entire parcel. The fronts on Hemenway and Boylston Streets and Massachusetts Avenue are at the suggested heights and are provided with bay windows. Units face the open space to the south with balconies. This open space provides public access from Edgerly Road to Boylston Street.

Barbara Ford  
Instructor: Mike Ertel

1090

F.A.R. gross	F.A.R. less Pkg.	Retail/ Commercial	Pkg. Spaces	Dwelling Units	Ldg. Rms.	Eff.	1BR	2BR	3BR
5.9	4.6	20,000	270	255	-	-	161	82	12



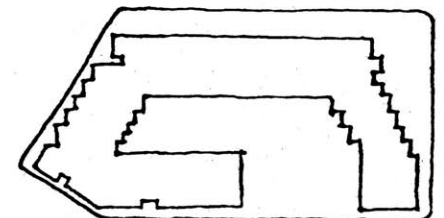


This proposal rebuilds the entire parcel with the highest point located at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street. Here a large open space is provided giving access to Edgerly Road through the site.

Scott Richardson  
Instructor: Peter Papesch

109E.

F.A.R. gross	F.A.R. less Pkg.	Retail/ Commercial	Pkg. Spaces	Dwelling Units	Ldg. Rms.	Eff.	1BR	2BR	3BR
5.3	4.1	27,500	250	292	-	48	120	118	6





be too large or too deep. Parking should be below grade and for no more than 250 cars. Materials similar to those of nearby buildings should be used in new construction. The remaining recommendations were the same as Blurock's and O'Hara's.

#### Audience response

Joseph Berlandi, Fenway Project Director, reported that the BRA Task Force study was still incomplete since traffic and financial information had not yet been assembled. He expected that the BRA study would be similar to FenPAC's and "felt the economic data would be the key factor in determining what happens to the site."<sup>16</sup> This last remark turned out to be prophetic.

Parcel 13 activists took issue with the conclusions of the reports. Since the appearance of old buildings was commended and that of Church Park was disparaged, why should the past mistakes be repeated on Parcels 12 and 13? Ralph Bennett replied that Church Park was a fact whose impact could be diminished by new building according to the recommended guidelines. Others complained that the issue of affordable rents had not been dealt with and that residents of the Parcel had had little input in the planning process. A dancing studio owner noted that although it was agreed that artists were an important part of the district, they were nonetheless excluded in future proposals. Father Robert Case summed up his objections by saying that the presentation "contradicted itself"; it described "in an excellent way just what the neighborhood is, emphasizing its human characteristics," but then made "recommendations which do not respond to what the neighborhood is."

### The Meeting With LaCentra

In August FenPAC, having heard nothing from LaCentra since January, requested that he meet with the PAC and explain "his present intentions with regard to Parcel 13."<sup>18</sup> Parcel 13 Partisans avidly awaited this meeting; it was to be the first occasion for any block activists to see LaCentra in person. A month later a dozen people met with LaCentra and his architect, A. A. Trulli, in a BRA conference room. LaCentra immediately expressed dissatisfaction with the size of the meeting and the persons in attendance. He said he expected a small meeting and demanded to know the function of all present. At his request several people who had been invited to attend by PAC member John Newby, a Parcel 13 resident, were asked to leave. Ejected were Jim Wetzel of the Boston Architectural Center project, designer of option 1, Peter Papesch, Boston Architectural Center instructor, Bill Braucher, a lawyer, and the writer, present as a member of the lately organized Friends of Parcel 13. Left at the conference were four BRA planners, Rick Bohn and Jackie Lowell of the PAC staff, Michael Jolliffe, chairman of the PAC proposal analysis committee, and John Newby, who, to LaCentra's annoyance, could not be asked to leave because he was a member of both FenPAC and the BRA Task Force. LaCentra was small, very thin, pale and, as he said, a sick man who was scheduled to see his doctor that afternoon. During the meeting, he made the following remarks:

"We only want to listen to homeowners who are taxpayers. ... We don't want to listen to a bunch of transients. ... We as developers are not required to listen to these tenant-at-will or one-year lease people. I thought FenPAC was just a bunch of organizations.

" ... We will move people from Charles River Park and the Prudential Apartments to the Fenway, which is a better location. ... 1978 rents will be one bedroom -- \$450, two bedrooms -- \$535, three bedrooms -- \$675, penthouses -- \$1000. There are not going to be families living here. We will have professionals, airline stewardesses. ... They split the rent. I want to live in the penthouse. ... The FHA wants to move on this project; they will approve these rents. The corner of Mass. and Boylston will have a large bank; I'm not at liberty to say who.

"We're not going to tolerate accusations. I'm not in any rackets. I'm proud to be an Italian. Some of your papers have said I wear several hats. You put in your papers the names and pictures of our buildings. ... Now apparently you have people on FenPAC who don't want anything to happen.

"We have to go into the ground in 1976. We want the BRA to take the parcel and clear it. ... We don't think any of your schemes are economically feasible. ... We won't decrease the height of this corner building under 25 stories; let me make this perfectly clear. ... You can't rent low-rise; people want to see the skyline. You're going to have enough old age and low income next to the Colonnade. ... I understood there never was intended to be low income rents on Parcel 13. ... We have an agreement with the BRA to go forward on this project. ... I've spent a quarter of a million so far. ... I'm not going to go over my figures here. ... You didn't have to study the options for the parcel; I already have. ... You will have a letter from a bank the first of the month to promise to finance us. ... I have 1.5 to 2 million equity. The worry is, is this area going to be improved? It should be the best part of Boston."

When asked for a copy of the letter of commitment for financing, LaCentra replied, "It's not a concern of FenPAC. ... I don't want my private affairs spread all over town." Joseph Berlandi, Fenway Project Director, pointed out that "once you turn a letter into the BRA, it will be a public document." There was still no design for the exterior facade of the building, and on the subject of open space, A. A. Trulli remarked, "1.5 million for pilings and you want me to create a park."<sup>19</sup> As of February, 1976, financial documentation had still not been furnished.

LaCentra's brusque behavior and his failure to understand the necessity for cooperation with the very people who would accept or reject his proposal embarrassed BRA planners and dismayed the PAC. Parcel activists were both surprised and greatly entertained; their speculations about LaCentra had been confirmed beyond their wildest dreams. Reports of his rudeness were widely circulated, and a front page story about the conference appeared in the November issue of the Fenway News.

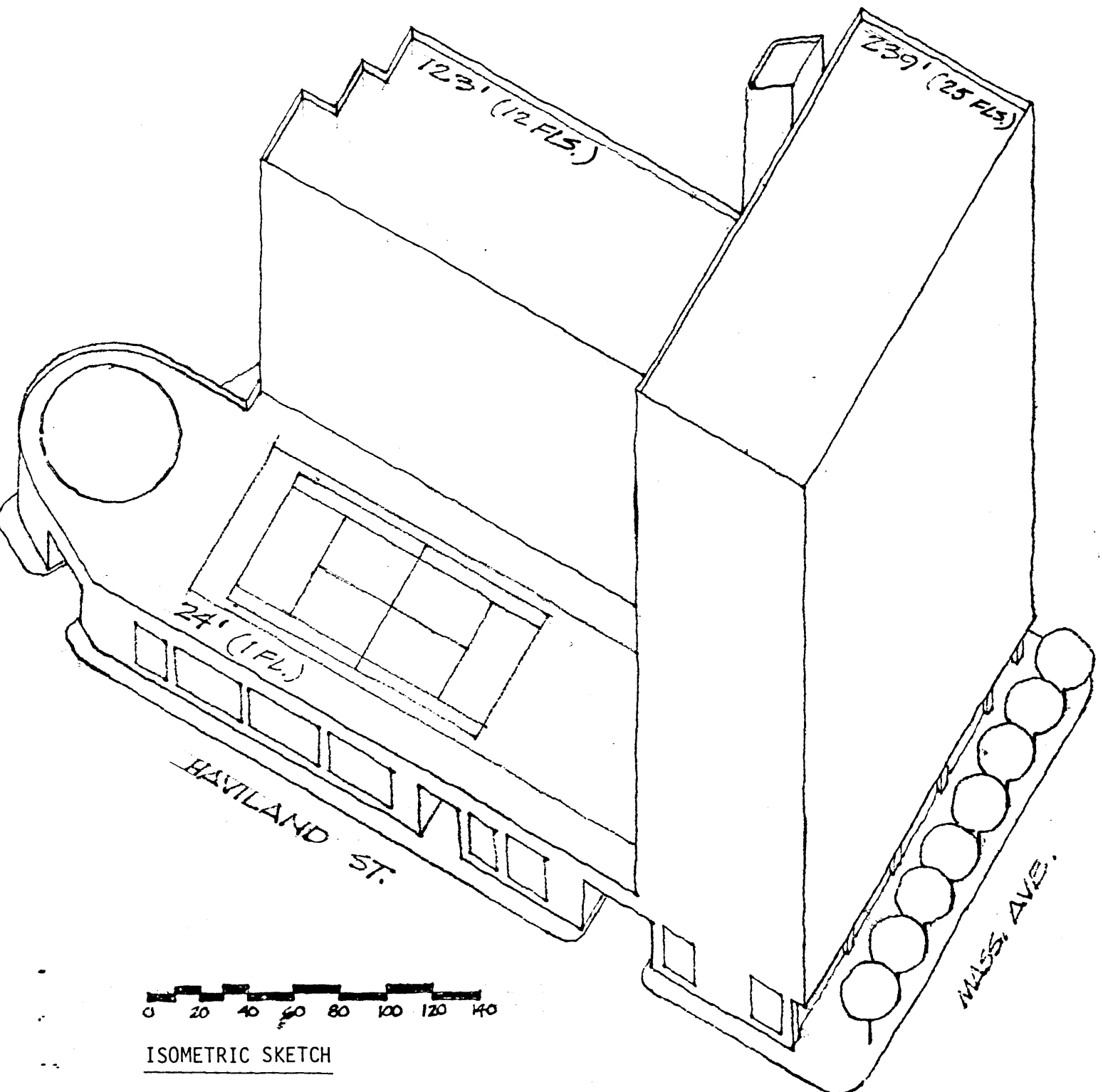
#### The End Of The Task Force

At the final meetings of the BRA Task Force, on October 14 and 21, the object of discussion was a document entitled Working Draft for Community Review, containing 36 pages of text and numerous tables and drawings. Six options were described and rated separately according to four criteria for review devised by the Task Force professionals. The four criteria, each with several subdivisions, were design, feasibility, traffic, and needs of population, and each was at first given equal weight. But since the criterion of financial feasibility was obviously paramount, an 11 page appendix on this topic was added to the Working Draft.

Option 1, LaCentra's design for 25 stories on Massachusetts Avenue, 12 on Boylston Street, and a one-story building along Haviland Street, filled the site completely. It failed to meet the criteria for design and needs of population but fulfilled the traffic criterion. Option 1 was deemed the most feasible of all, provided that LaCentra's estimate of \$26./sq. ft. and his figures on average expected rents of \$550 a month could be accepted at face value. Although BRA planners stated at meetings that construction estimates were inaccurate and that the anticipated in-

LA CENTRA PROPOSAL/ FAR 7.85

Parking 278 spaces  
 Retail 39,470 sq. ft.  
 Health Club 14,445 sq. ft.  
 Apartments 521,582 sq. ft.  
 343 units



## FIGURE A-1

## FAR 8-LA CENTRA'S PROPOSAL

1/3B.

## Construction costs

343 units @ \$33,000/unit	\$11,336,000
(\$26/ sq.ft. 1275 gr. sq.ft./unit )	

61,079 gr. sq.ft. of commercial space	1,954,500
@ \$32/gross sq.ft.	

278 parking spaces @ \$5625/space	1,563,750
\$15/gr. sq.ft., 375 gr. sq.ft./space	

Arcade and Improvements (estimated)	200,000
-------------------------------------	---------

	<u>\$15,054,250</u>
--	---------------------

Development costs @ 30% of construction cost	4,516,275
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Land	500,000
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Total Development Cost	<u>\$20,070,525</u>
------------------------	---------------------

## II Revenues and Expenses

## A. Rental Income (annual)

1. Parking 250 spaces @ \$65/mo	195,000
28 spaces @ \$60/mo	<u>20,160</u>
	215,160

- Taxes @ 17% gross	-36,577
---------------------	---------

- Operating expenses (\$150/space)	-41,400
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Net Before Debt Service	<u>\$137,183</u>
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## 2. Commerical

61,079 gross sq.ft. @ 80% efficiency @ \$8.00/net sq.ft.	391,000
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- 8% vacancy	31,275
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- Taxes @ 17% of adj. gross inc.	61,150
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- Operating expenses @ 2.00 /net sq.ft.	97,720
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Net Income before Debt Service	200,855
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## 3. Residential

341 units @ 550/unit /mo	2,250,600
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- Vacancy @ 5%	112,530
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113C.

-Taxes @ 17% of adj. gross	363,470
-Operating Expences @ 1200/unit	<u>409,000</u>

Net Before-Debt Service	1,365,400
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TOTAL Net Income Before Debt Service	1,703,438
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Debt Service on loan of 85% of total Development cost @ 8.5% plus .5% FHA premium or 9.24% constant for H0 years. (Loan Amount = 17,059,946) -	1,575,340
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Net income after debt service	127,100
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Equity (15% of Project Cost)	3,010,575
------------------------------	-----------

Return to Equity	4%
------------------	----

come was probably overstated, the written report did not face this issue directly. The report stated that "risk is best evaluated by the developer who has to put in the equity and by the FHA which insures the project and the financial institution which loans the money."<sup>20</sup> All things considered, "it is reasonable to conclude that he will be able to obtain financing and that the project will be successful," but "(i)f ... estimates are inaccurate, the proposal may very possibly be infeasible."<sup>21</sup>

Option 2, the BRA version of a high-rise development, called for 24 stories on Massachusetts Avenue, 10 on Boylston Street, and 7 on Hemenway Street. A public park facing Haviland Street provided pedestrian access through the site to Boylston Street. This option was also found wanting in meeting the design, feasibility, and population needs criteria. The report concluded that because the Hemenway Street low-rise apartments would bring in lower rents, option 2 was less feasible than option 1.

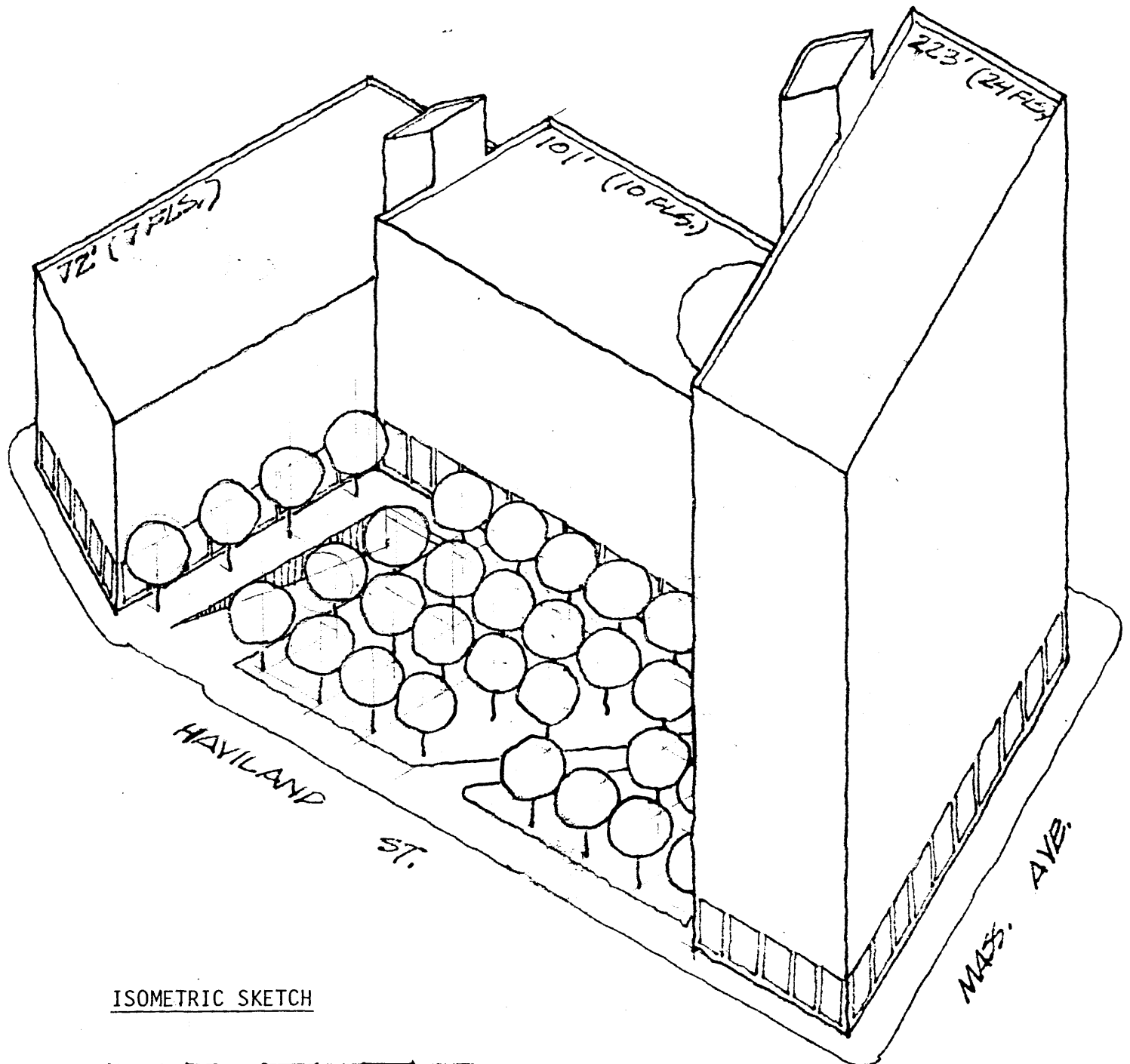
Option 3 followed the guidelines of the FenPAC studies, with 12 stories on Massachusetts Avenue, 8 on Boylston Street, and 7 on Hemenway Street. Option 4 showed 13 stories on Massachusetts Avenue, 8 on Boylston Street, with rehabilitation of the Fenway Club, the Parkgate, and 13 Haviland Street. Option 5 called for total rehabilitation of the entire site with no new construction and had the fatal flaw of prohibiting the widening of Massachusetts Avenue. The report pointed out that although these three options met the design requirements, each would require relocation and greatly increased rents and, without government subsidies, would be just as detrimental to the interests of existing parcel users as options 1 and 2. For any of these schemes, the report concluded, reduced construction costs would be more than offset by the decreased potential



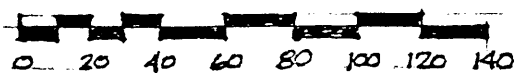
114A.

ALTERNATIVE 2

Parking 278 spaces  
Retail 39,500 sq. ft.  
Health Club 14,500 sq. ft.  
Apartments 521,600 sq. ft.  
343 units



ISOMETRIC SKETCH



## FIGURE A-2

FAR 8 - BRA

114B

## Construction costs

343 units @ \$33,000/unit (\$26/ sq.ft. 1275 gr. sq.ft./unit )	\$11,336,000
---	--------------

61,079 gr. sq.ft. of commercial space @ \$32/gross sq.ft.	1,954,500
--	-----------

278 parking spaces @ \$5625/space \$15/gr. sq.ft., 375 gr. sq.ft./space	1,563,750
--	-----------

Arcade and Improvements (estimated)	200,000
-------------------------------------	---------

	<u>\$15,054,250</u>
--	---------------------

Development costs @ 30% of construction cost	4,516,275
--	-----------

Land	500,000
------	---------

Total Development Cost	<u>\$20,070,525</u>
------------------------	---------------------

-----

## II Revenues and Expenses

## A. Rental Income (annual)

1. Parking 250 spaces @ \$65/mo	195,000
28 spaces @ \$60/mo	<u>20,160</u>
	215,160

- Taxes @ 17% gross	-36,577
---------------------	---------

- Operating expenses (\$150/space)	-41,400
------------------------------------	---------

Net Before Debt Service	<u>\$137,183</u>
-------------------------	------------------

## 2. Commerical

61,079 gross sq.ft. @ 80% efficiency @\$10.00/net sq.ft.	488,600
---	---------

- 8% vacancy	39,100
--------------	--------

- Taxes @ 17% of adj. gross inc.	76,415
----------------------------------	--------

- Operating expenses @ 2.00 /net sq.ft.	97,720
---	--------

Net Income before Debt Service	275,365
--------------------------------	---------

## 3. Residential

341 units @\$515/unit /mo	2,107,400
---------------------------	-----------

- Vacancy @ 5%	<u>105,400</u>
----------------	----------------

114C.

-Taxes @ 17% of adj. gross	340,350
-Operating Expences @ 1200/unit	<u>409,000</u>
Net Before-Debt Service	1,252,650
 TOTAL Net Income Before Debt Service	 1,665,200
 Debt Service on loan of 85% of total Development cost @ 8.5% plus .5% FHA premium or 9.24% constant for HO years. (Loan Amount = 17,059,946) -	    1,575,340
 Net income after debt service	 90,000
 Equity (15% of Project Cost)	 3,010,575
 Return to Equity	 2.9%

OPTION 3 114D.

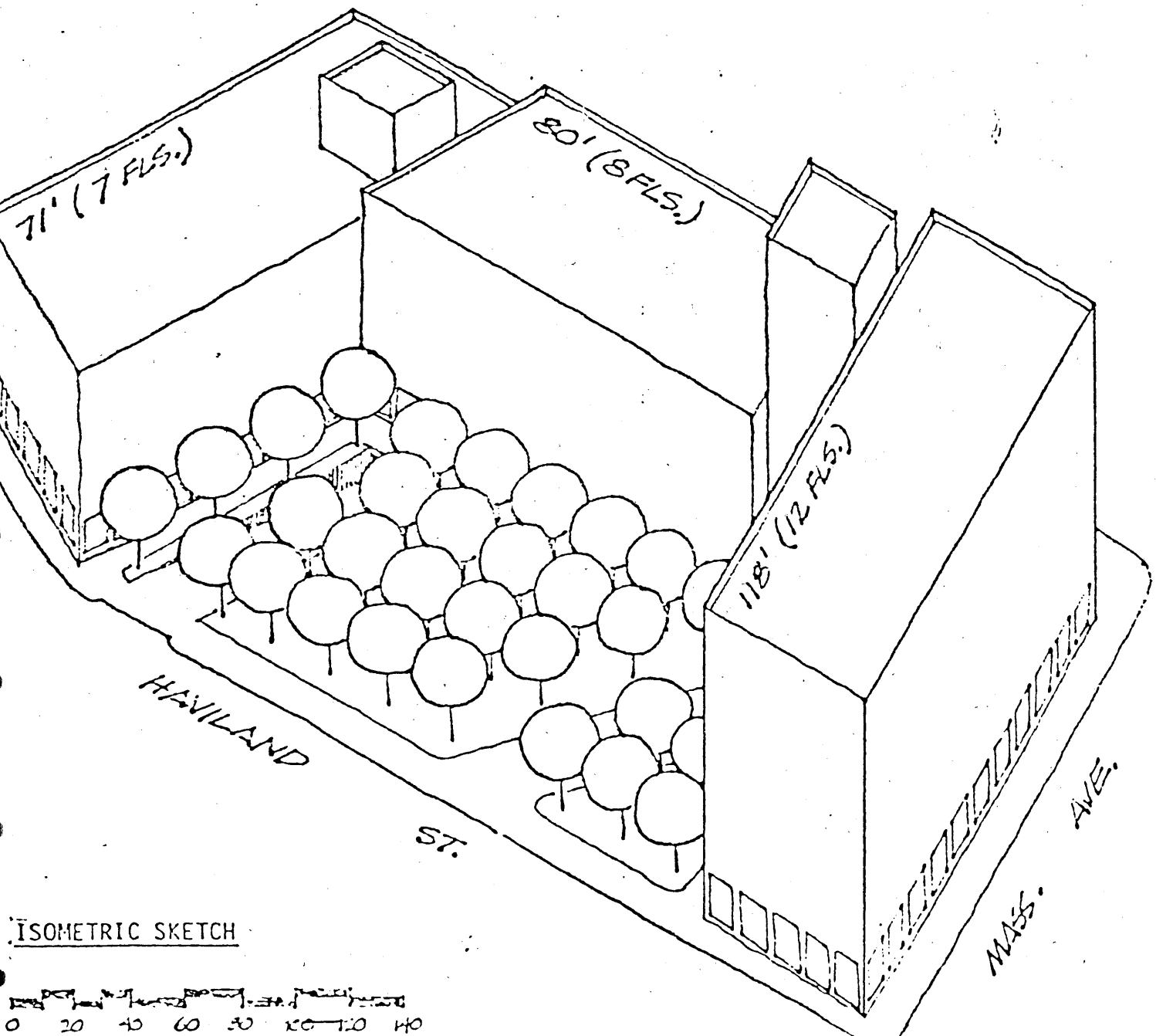
FAR 4+ BONUS

PROGRAM

Parking 160 spaces  
Retail 38,500 sq. ft.  
Office 26,000 sq. ft.  
Apartments 281,000 sq. ft.  
200 units

COST DATA

Residential rents - \$480/month  
Retail rents - \$9.00/s.f.  
Commercial rents - \$7.00/s.f.  
Project costs - \$3,300,000  
Projected taxes - \$277,000/yr.



ISOMETRIC SKETCH

OPTION 4

114E.

REHAB AND NEW AT FAR 4+ BONUS

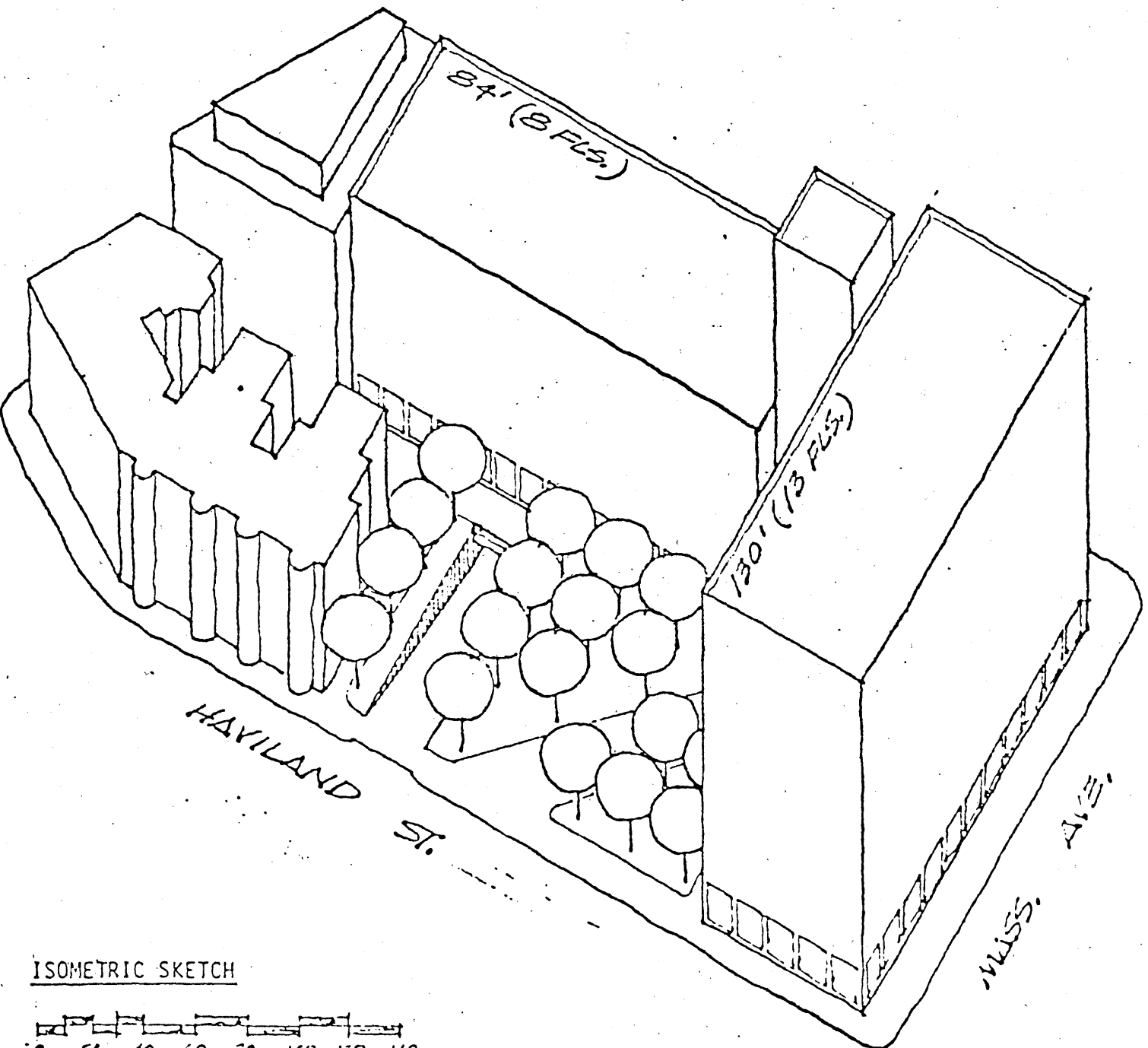
PROGRAM

NEW BUILDING  
 Parking 120 spaces  
 Retail 26,000 sq.ft.  
 Office 25,000 Sq.ft.  
 Apartments 219,000 sq.ft.  
 155 units

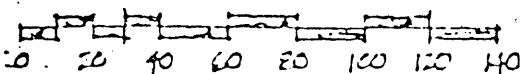
REHAB  
 Retail 4,000 sq.ft.  
 Office 4,000 sq.ft.  
 Apartments 42 units

COST DATA

Residential rents \$.500/month new  
 \$.300/month rehab  
 Retail rents \$9.00 s.f. new  
 \$6.50 s.f. rehab  
 Commercial rents \$7.00 s.f. new  
 \$5.50 s.f. rehab  
 Project costs \$3,250,000  
 Projected taxes \$225,000



ISOMETRIC SKETCH



OPTION 5

GUT REHAB

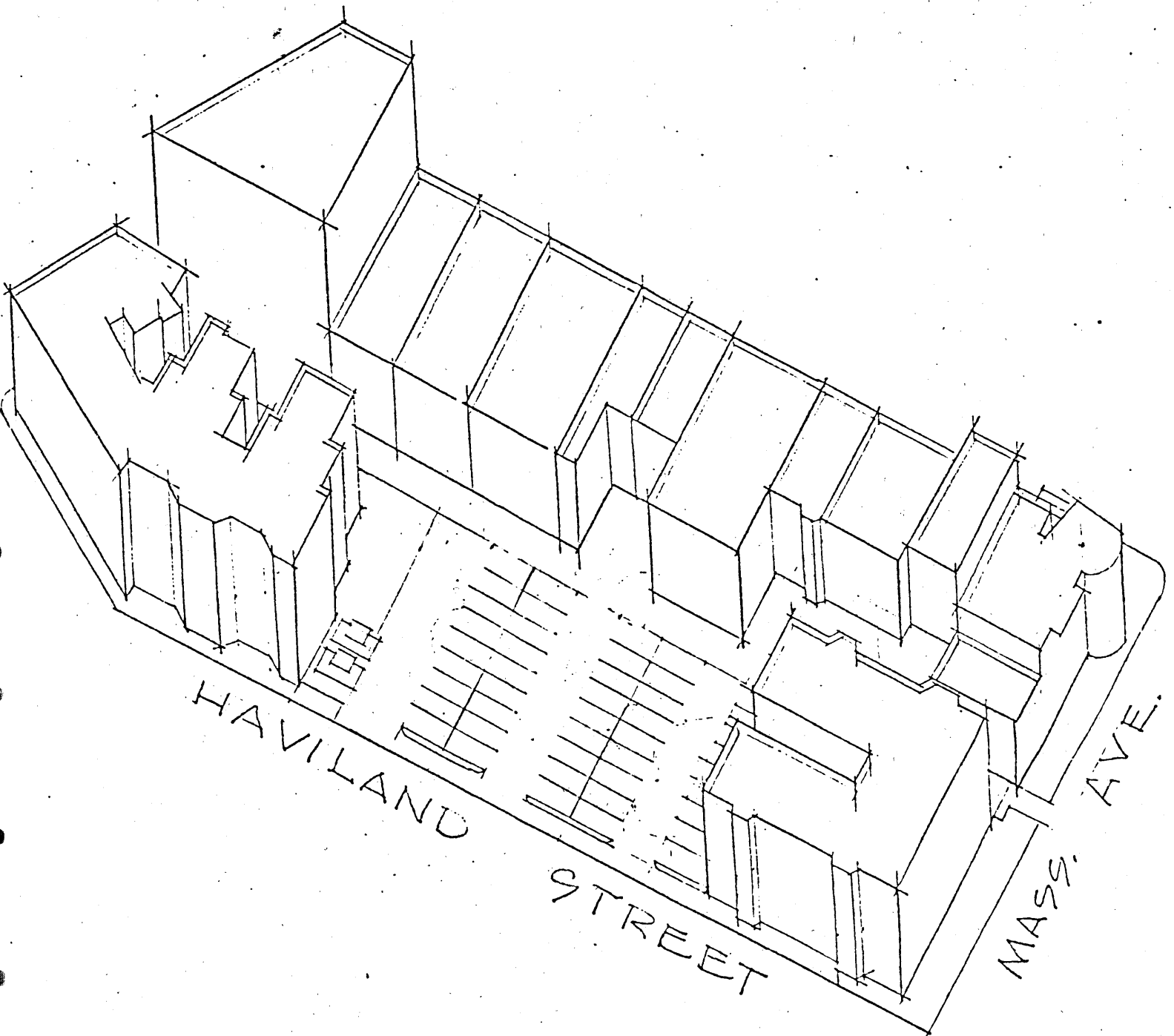
114F.

PROGRAM

Parking - 48 cars  
Retail - 66,000 s.f.  
Office - 41,120  
Apartments - 61 d.u.  
                  45 transient  
                  45 rooms

Cost Data

Residential rents - 100%-200% increase  
Retail rents - \$6.50 s.f.  
Commercial rents - \$5.50 s.f.  
Project costs - \$3,100,000  
Projected taxes - \$185,000



for rental income. Another assumption was that saving the residential buildings on the west end of the site would have a "substantial negative impact on the rents which can be obtained in the new construction."<sup>22</sup>.

Thorough rehabilitation of the whole parcel would require rents comparable to those for new construction, and since there were few buildings with large commercial spaces, income would not suffice to cover costs. Basement space would need repair and would "have little or no revenue producing ability."<sup>23</sup>.

The sixth option was to dedesignate the site as a renewal parcel, to sell BRA owned properties, and allow rehabilitation to occur on an ad hoc basis. The report emphasized the dangers of such a course of action. Relocation benefits might not be available unless tenants were moved before the closeout of the Fenway Plan and for the purpose of bringing the buildings up to code. Moreover, if more than 50%, or possibly even 25%, of the appraised value of the building were to be spent on repairs in one year's time, the results would have to meet the stringent requirements of the new state building code. Rehabilitation by individual owners would forego the economies of scale which, it was assumed, would accrue to a thorough rehabilitation project by a single developer, and financing would be much more difficult and more expensive to obtain. There would be "no assurance that sign and facade upgrading would take place" and no guarantee of "the future disposition or condition of the property." ... "Since market forces would operate under option 6, there is no assurance that in the future the owners' interest would coincide with that of the current tenants."<sup>24</sup>.

OPTION 6

AD HOC REHAB

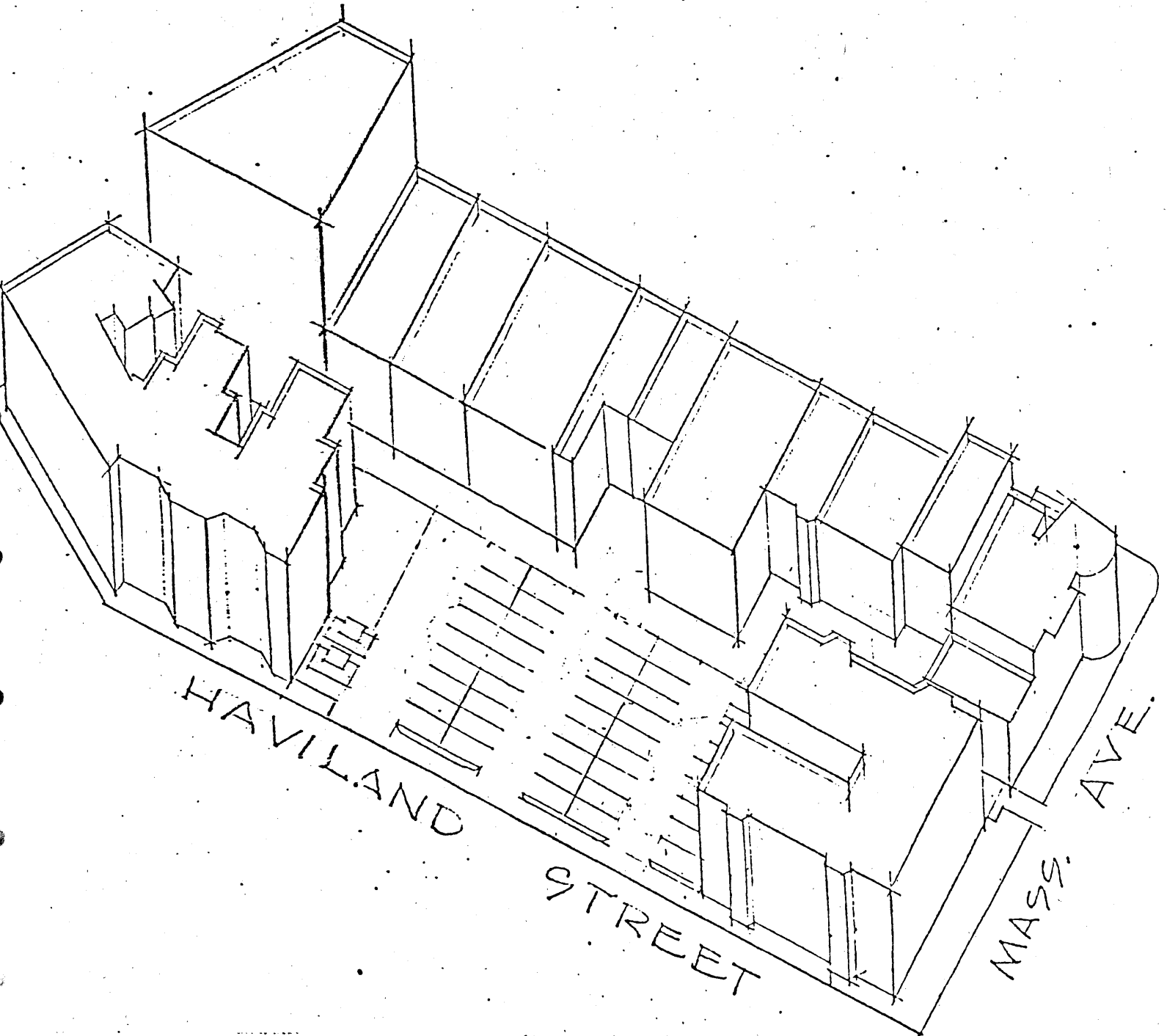
115A.

PROGRAM

Parking - 48 cars  
Retail - 66,000  
Office - 41,120  
Apartments - 61 d.u.  
                  45 transient  
                  45 rooms

COST DATA

Residential rents - unknown  
Retail rents - @\$6.00 s.f.  
Commercial rents - @\$5.00 s.f.  
Project Costs - \$500,000  
Projected Taxes - \$150,000-\$175,000





The advantages of option 6 were that it would require the least public investment and "might be profitable and marketable."<sup>25</sup> "(I)f each owner rehabilitated on his own, he might not require the return ... from the process that a developer would expect."<sup>26</sup> But in the appended summation of comparative feasibility, the disadvantages were emphasized, and the means of avoiding the possibly harmful consequences of building code and relocation regulations, mentioned in the main report, were overlooked. For this option only, the standard for feasibility shifted away from profitability. Instead, option 6 was dismissed as the least feasible alternative because it was "unlikely that any significant amount of rehabilitation would occur on an ad hoc basis in the next several years."<sup>27</sup> ... "The buildings, their age, condition, mixed tenancy, and lack of owner and investor interest make it doubtful that an ad hoc rehabilitation option would benefit the city, the neighborhood, or the current tenants."<sup>28</sup>

#### Costs and benefits

Included in the report was a table labeled Economic Analysis; Public Cost/Benefits which listed only the direct project costs and the tax revenues, based on 17% of gross income, which could be expected for each option. The largest increment projected was for Boylston Towers. No properly conceptualized public cost-benefit analysis was carried out. Consequently no values were attached to existing public benefits on the Parcel. There was no thought of allocating to Boylston Towers a portion of those city operating costs, such as police and fire protection, water, sewage, sanitation, and traffic regulation, which rise on a per capita basis with rising population densities and floor-

TABLE 6

## Economic Analysis; Public Costs/Benefits

## Alternatives

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	FAR 7.85-La Centra	FAR 7.85-BRA	FAR-4-New	FAR-4-Mix	Gut Rehab	Ad Hoc Rehab
No. Units	343	343	200	197	61	61
Rents \$/Month	\$550/month	\$500	\$480	\$500 new \$300 rehab	45 transient 45 rooms 100-200%	45 transient 45 rooms
Parking Spaces	278	290	160	120	48	48
Sq. Ft. Retail	39,400	38,500	38,500	30,000	66,000	66,000
Rents	\$9.00/sf	\$9.00/sf	\$9.00/sf	\$9.00/sf new \$6.50/rehab	\$6.50/sf	\$6.00/sf
Com. Space Sq.Ft.	21,609	38,500 ft	26,000	30,000	41,120	41,120
Rents	\$7.00/sf	7.00/sf	\$7.00/sf	\$7.00/new	\$5.50/sf	\$5.00/sf
<hr/>						
Project Costs	\$3,300,000	\$3,300,000	\$3,300,000	\$3,250,000	\$3,100,000	\$500,000
Capital Improvements	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	<u>\$5,500,000</u> }	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$500,000
Acquisition	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	--
Proceeds	(500,000)	(500,000)	(500,000)	(500,000)	(500,000)	--
Demolition	200,000	200,000	200,000	150,000	-	--
Relocation	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	Unknown
<hr/>						
Taxes Existing	\$ 142,000	\$ 142,000	\$ 142,000	\$ 142,000	\$ 142,000	\$ 142,000
Projected	\$ 461,200	\$ 425,000	\$ 277,000	\$ 225,00	\$ 185,000	\$150,000 - \$175,000

1/64.

to-area ratios. Public benefits were defined solely as increases in tax revenues, with no consideration given to the question of their eventual use. If the provision of low rent apartments and the encouragement of eclectic small businesses are proper functions for city government, the costs of removal of such benefits should have been subtracted from the anticipated revenue increases.

If the city ought to improve the standard of living of city residents on the basis of need, the job impact of the several options might have been evaluated. How many jobs would result at what wages, and would they be taken by Fenway or Boston residents or by commuters, by people of scant or of adequate means? The project costs of Boylston Towers were estimated at \$3,300,000, and the payback period to the city would be about ten years under the most optimistic assumptions about rental income and property tax yields. Even if the sole public benefit worthy of consideration were the maximization of city revenues, the consequences of an alternate public investment of equal dollar value might well have been considered.

#### Bohn's comments

At the October 21 meeting, FenPAC administrator Rick Bohn submitted a six page commentary on the Task Force Working Draft, which challenged many of its conclusions and chastised the BRA for failing to protect the public interest by making an independent analysis and drawing its own conclusions about the financial feasibility of the Boylston Towers proposal. The contention that high-rise construction was most feasible was supported only by the most optimistic assumptions

for high rise construction and the most pessimistic assumptions for the low rise new construction or rehabilitation options. How could there be a fair basis for comparison when new construction costs for Boylston Towers were put at \$26 per square foot and rehabilitation costs at \$20 to \$25?

Bohn also pointed out that the Boylston Towers Apartments would be "among the most costly in the entire city,"<sup>29</sup> and that the building would face stiff competition from many other luxury units. As for the site itself, views would include the Massachusetts Turnpike. "To the east and west are buildings occupied by a school of contemporary music. Over 2000 aspiring jazz and rock musicians make several trips daily across the parcel ... . While this traffic could be an asset for other land uses, it would tend to be a liability for residents of the LaCentra scheme. ... To the south of the parcel lies a low and moderate income neighborhood. Even with the redevelopment of the adjacent Parcel 12, ... the socio-economic makeup of the remaining neighborhood is likely to stay about as it is now for many years to come." Bohn also maintained that though the site was close to the Prudential Center, its "actual physical and psychological links to it are now weak."<sup>30</sup> The proposed commercial space also was not related to local demand for small spaces at rents of \$4 to \$7 per square foot. For all these reasons, the ability of Boylston Towers to furnish the anticipated rental revenues was most unlikely.

It was also a mistake, Bohn maintained, to expect lower rents from the low-rise apartments in options 2 and 3, since these units would face a park instead of overlooking a roof, as in option 1. The conclu-

sion that a mix of new and old construction would make new space less desirable was also challenged; what difference would it make to potential tenants whether older buildings were at one end of the block itself or just across a narrow street?

Bohn drew the conclusion that under present conditions, option 2 was probably the most feasible. But, he pointed out, it was "unrealistic to assume" that the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency would be forever "out of action."<sup>31</sup> Failure to construct a high-rise tower, with its expensive foundation work, would save construction costs and might make less luxurious new or rehabilitated buildings eligible for Section 8 rent subsidies in the future.

#### Response of Parcel activists

The writer, at the request of the Parcel 13 Citizen's Committee representatives, had prepared a financial analysis of a thorough rehabilitation job costing about \$5,000,000. Syndication proceeds were treated as equity to reduce amortization costs and enhance the possibility that a neighborhood development corporation might be named as developer. With construction costs at \$26 per square foot, commercial rents of \$6.25 per square foot a year, and the largest six room apartments renting at about \$340 a month, it appeared that such a project would return 4.5% on equity, compared to the BRA's figures of 4% for Boylston Towers, and 2.9% for option 2. If apartment rents received maximum Section 8 subsidies, the rehabilitation option would meet the needs for both low rent space and feasibility. But BRA planner John Weiss asserted that Section 8 regulations specifically excluded mixed

Option 7      Total Rehabilitation

119A.

Construction Costs ( 183,000 s. f. x \$22)	4,026,000
Development Costs (20% of construction costs)	805,200
Developer's Fee or BSPRA (10% of construction + development costs)	483,120
Site Cost (25% of La Centra's price)	125,000
Total Development Cost	\$5,439,320

10% assumed equity	543,932
less developer's fee	<u>-483,120</u>
Cash required	60,812

Mortgage (90% of total cost 9 1/2% for 40 years)	4,895,388
---	-----------

Syndication proceeds (15% of mortgage amount)	734,308
---	---------

Mortgage (with syndication proceeds used as equity)	\$4,221,892
--	-------------

Income:

* Residential rent (101,000 s.f. x \$4) a year	404,000
less 15% for circulation =	343,400
Commercial rent (82,076 s.f. x \$6.25) a year	512,975
less 15% for circulation =	435,029

$$343,400 + 435,029 = 840,029$$

$$5\% \text{ vacancy deduction } \underline{-42,000}$$

Total Income	\$798,029
--------------	-----------

Expenses:

Property taxes @ 16% of gross income	127,684
Operating costs	
Commercial (\$2 per s.f.)	139,529
Residential (\$1 per s.f.)	<u>85,850</u>
	225,379

Debt service (9 1/2%, 40 years)	411,381
---------------------------------	---------

Total Expenses	\$764,444
----------------	-----------

Net Income \$33,585	Rate of return 4.5% on 13.5% equity
---------------------	-------------------------------------

\* Assumes Section 8 subs. not Available, according to John Weiss, B.L.H.

use rehabilitation on a massive scale. Believing this the case, Parcel 13 representatives John Newby and Mike Silver were about ready to conclude that Parcel 13 should be entirely dedesignated; it would probably be better to take their chances with the market than endure relocation and expensive rehabilitation on a massive scale. What would happen if 1.5 or 2 million were invested in the Parcel? Most likely, they thought, individual owners could repair more cheaply than a single developer.

The Parcel 13 representatives concurred with Rick Bohn's criticisms. They were particularly dissatisfied with the casual treatment which, they said, had been accorded all along to the options favored by Parcel 13 users. They did not believe that the estimates for rehabilitation costs were accurate; the building survey had been much too cursory. Also BRA estimates about interest rates and terms which individual owners were likely to secure for rehabilitation loans and the effect of these finance costs upon rents were met with skepticism; the BRA was again assuming the worst for rehabilitation options. Interest rates for new construction were set at 9% for 40 years, but loans for rehabilitation were for short terms of 8 to 15 years and at interest rates of 10 to 13%.

At these Task Force meetings, as at other times, the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee representatives complained about the planning process. BRA planners and architects ought to have treated Parcel 13 users as clients; they should have worked on the block, interviewing residents and storekeepers at length, instead of, as in Kenney's reply to Committee demands, challenging the group to submit a professional proposal.

FIGURE A-3

*QQA.*

## Effect on Goren Building Rentals of Various Rehab Costs

Present Gross Income (Before BRA Acquisition) \$71,000

(BRA Income) \$56,000

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Ann. Payment</u>	<u>% Increase Over Pre-BRA</u>	<u>% Increase Over BRA</u>
50,000	15	10	6,450	9.0%	11.4
		12	7,200	10.1	12.7
		13	7,590	10.6	13.4
	10	10	7,930	11.1	14.0
		12	8,610	12.1	15.2
		13	8,960	12.6	15.8
	8	10	9,100	12.8	16.1
		12	9,750	13.7	17.2
		13	10,085	14.2	17.8
100,000	15	10	12,900	18.1	22.8
		12	14,400	20.2	25.4
		13	15,180	21.3	26.8
	10	10	15,860	22.3	28.0
		12	17,215	24.2	30.4
		13	17,915	25.2	31.7
	8	10	18,210	25.6	32.2
		12	19,500	27.4	34.5
		13	20,160	28.3	35.6
150,000	15	10	19,350	27.2	34.2
		12	21,600	30.4	38.2
		13	22,670	31.9	40.1
	10	10	23,790	33.5	42.1
		12	25,825	36.3	45.7
		13	26,875	37.8	47.5
	8	10	27,310	38.4	48.3
		12	29,250	41.1	51.7
		13	30,245	42.5	53.5



Another criticism was that BRA planners misunderstood the unique nature of commercial activity on the block and consequently underestimated the potential for marketing vacant space, especially for studios and businesses serving the arts. Vacancies on the block were largely caused by BRA neglect; only the uncertainty caused by renewal plans was preventing many business people from expanding their operations. Several landlords would undoubtedly make repairs if continued ownership could be assured.

The Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee representatives, in short, declared that they could not assent to the conclusions of the draft report as they then were stated. But BRA planners had been working on the Parcel 13 project for seven months and were plainly tired of it. Under current economic conditions what more could be done, they wondered aloud, except to continue to argue over the relative degrees of infeasibility for the various options? "You can do this much," John Newby replied. "At least get rid of LaCentra for us." With that the last meeting of the Task Force came to an end; the so called Working Draft for Community Review never assumed a more final form.

Some portions of the report were rather encouraging to those who favored minimal rehabilitation. LaCentra could be dedesignated unless satisfactory arrangements were made about financing and design changes. The BRA might then either rewrite the guidelines according to the criteria for review and advertise for a new developer, or, if the financial climate should fail to improve, submit to the ad hoc rehabilitation option.

The Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee and the Friends of Parcel 13

Throughout 1975 the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee met five times. In January and February two small meetings took place at which various methods of stopping Boylston Towers were discussed. Possibly, it was thought, a court case could be initiated on the grounds that public funds would be used to evict low income residents and replace them with high income tenants. Another point which could be developed was the issue of crime; members believed that a comparison of crime figures for Parcel 13 and Church Park would prove that Parcel 13 was safer because there were more people on the streets at night. Neither of these projects was ever carried out. Maximum publicity for the plight of Parcel residents and storekeepers was of great importance. LaCentra's business dealings should be investigated in hopes of uncovering criminal connections or corrupt practices. Several Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee members believed that LaCentra had been given favorable treatment by the BRA, both for Boylston Towers and Back Bay Manor, because of past contributions to mayoral campaigns. There were also third-hand rumors that LaCentra had Mafia connections. One group member was later told that reports of campaign contributions had been destroyed, and no evidence of spectacular scandal was uncovered. Articles favorable to the position of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee appeared in the Ledger over the course of the year, and monthly in the Fenway News. Plans were made to contact other newspaper and television reporters, but no more articles materialized.

Later in the year notices of meetings were placed on doorways and lampposts around Parcel 13. Eleven people in April, and 20 people in

July, were brought up to date on LaCentra's plans, the response of FenPAC, and the various Parcel studies and options. All present favored rehabilitation of the block with no demolition or street widening. New construction should be confined to the parking lot and the rooftops as in the Wetzel plan. It was also decided that Parcel representatives would ask the BRA to supply an architect-planner to work with the local planning group. Eventually an alternate plan should be presented to FenPAC and the BRA, with a neighborhood development corporation (a joint venture of local merchants, interested tenants, and property owners) as developer. The May letter to BRA Director Kenney and his reply, rejecting the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee demands, was also mentioned.

Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee members felt strongly that Parcel residents and business people should determine the future plans for the block. Nonetheless the support of their allies from other streets in the Fenway was sometimes minimized when some PAC members pointed out that these persons did not actually live on the Parcel. Accordingly, at a F.I.G. meeting on July 17, the formation of a support group, to be known as the Friends of Parcel 13, was announced. The signatures of 42 members were eventually appended to a statement backing the effort of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee "to protect their right to live and work where they have chosen." "(T)he construction of luxury housing to accommodate a more transient population" was said to be unwarranted.

In September the Boston City Council, at the behest of Parcel activists, passed a resolution calling for "rehabilitation of the parcel in accordance with existing uses and without demolition, and development which assures future occupancy at affordable rents to all

current residential and commercial tenants who wish to remain in Parcel 13." However, the powers of the City Council over the BRA have been quite ineffectual to date.

In November twenty-two people attended a general meeting of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee. The resolution of the City Council and the formation of the Friends of Parcel 13 was announced. The work of the BRA Task Force was reviewed, with Parcel representatives disclaiming responsibility for or approval of the results. Events at the meeting with LaCentra were described; dedesignation was thought to be a real possibility. Several people expressed the hope that a small neighborhood development corporation could eventually do a modest job of rehabilitation. Since the BRA had allotted funds for demolition, site improvements, and property acquisition, the agency should think of some legal means for using at least some of that money for up-to-code rehabilitation by a local development group. It was agreed that the Parcel 13 property owners were probably the least informed and among the most bitter of all Parcel users. They would be contacted and asked to attend the next Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee meeting, at which time they would be presented with copies of Parcel 13 studies, queried about their intentions in the event of total dedesignation of the site as an urban renewal parcel, and presented with the various marketing and expansion ideas of the business people and other Parcel users. (This meeting has not been scheduled to date, probably because activists were preoccupied with PAC elections.) Most important, the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee would ask FenPAC to make a formal request to the BRA to dedesignate LaCentra.

At all meetings of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee, frequent complaints were heard about BRA management of the buildings under its control. Maintenance was said to be poor, and space was left vacant even when potential tenants were available. In the Fenway Club, according to two sources, residential tenants were being encouraged to move, and vacancies were not filled in order to avoid extra relocation payments. Another frequent topic was the use to which Parcel space could be put and the state of health and likelihood of expansion of the various businesses in the block. It was also discovered that the city had taken the Waldorf portion of the Mahoney property for taxes and was threatening to raise studio tenants' rents. The Real Property Department would probably not auction it off because of anticipated BRA interest.

#### FenPAC Requests Rejection of LaCentra

In a late November meeting, the PAC responded to the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee's request for a recommendation of dedesignation for LaCentra. It passed a motion calling upon the BRA to furnish the financial statement for Boylston Towers and information about the legal status of the BRA's relationship with the developer. Joseph Berlandi, Fenway Project Director, responded that the legal situation was being studied and that prospects for a feasible project seemend uncertain. He promised an official statement on the subject before long. When no further information was forthcoming, the PAC on January 13 voted unanimously to request the BRA board to dedesignate the Boylston Towers Associates. The BRA asked LaCentra to make his financial plan available

by the end of February and planned to hold up any further action on the Parcel until the new FenPAC took office after the March 30 elections. The PAC voted to oppose the Massachusetts Avenue reconstruction plan, which would have made demolition of the buildings at the eastern side of the site inevitable.

## II. Uses and Reuses for Parcel 13.

Interviews and meetings of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee and FenPAC furnished many ideas about the overall appearance and appropriate functions for the site. Altogether 42 interviews were conducted, ten by Karla Rideout, chairperson of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee, in 1973, and 32 by the writer, in 1975. Those interviewed were one professional planner, eleven businesses, three employees, five property owners, and eight nonactivist residents. Of the fourteen activist residents interviewed, three were citizens, and eleven were partisans. Because the interviewers were participants as well as observers, friends of Partisans, and identified with that faction, planners and Citizens were underrepresented in interviews; however there was ample opportunity to note their opinions at meetings and in casual conversations.

### Outdoor Use and Appearance

Partisans and Citizens share several concepts about the image and uses of the block, but differ in emphasis and in the specificity of their ideas. Almost everyone agrees that if new construction occurs, the height and massing should follow the guidelines of the PAC design studies. Whether the eventual outcome is rehabilitation or new construction, there should be a park on at least part of the present parking lot with a walkway to Boylston Street. Stores on the perimeter of the Parcel could have back entrances onto the park. The park would serve as a visible terminal point for Edgerly Road and, by encouraging pedestrian traffic along its length, might also promote the rent-up of the largely vacant commercial space on the Edgerly Road frontage of

### Church Park.

Some Parcel users, especially business people, stress the benefits of at least a modest amount of parking space, either on the site itself or just across Boylston Street on a leftover triangle of land beside the turnpike. A few people suggest building the park on a deck over the parking lot so that both functions could co-exist.

Parcel residents, storekeepers, and abutters, unlike the Citizens, also see great potential for outdoor use along the wide Boylston Street sidewalk. A baffle of curbside trees and bushes would screen the traffic somewhat, and the sidewalk could be leveled out or terraced and attractively paved. Built-in benches and tables would provide further amenities for pedestrians and encourage commercial use as well. The necessity for better street cleaning is a top priority for those who frequent the block.

### Rehabilitation or New Construction?

A distinct difference between the Citizens and professional planners on the one hand, and the Partisans, storekeepers, and Parcel residents on the other, is the attitude toward rehabilitation. Quite apart from the issue of financial feasibility, Citizens and professionals are skeptical about the chances of greatly improving the appearance of the block without new construction. If any buildings are to be saved, in this view, they should be the largely residential property at the western end of the site. As for the commercial space, there is too much of it in proportion to the amount and type of retail consumers the area can furnish. It is also considered inherently unmarketable because of



its antiquity and supposed inefficiency.

Many Parcel tenants and Partisans consider the buildings attractive and even charming; almost everyone in this group is of the opinion that all that is needed for the outside of the buildings is a little dressing up, including painting, new storefronts, and more attractive signs and window displays. These embellishments combined with the new park, improvements to the alley and sidewalks, and new lighting, planting, and street furniture would result in a far more attractive and lively atmosphere than any new construction option.

#### Housing

Few Citizens or planners have any specific suggestions about interior uses; there is only the general assumption that either new construction or thorough rehabilitation will inevitably mean higher rents and different tenants, an outcome which is anticipated with varying degrees of complacency.

Partisans, Parcel tenants, and local residents stress the need for modest, affordable, low-rise housing and maintain that the unique mix of single rooms and large apartments should be maintained and possibly expanded. Since intown urban renewal activity over the past decade has driven artists from pillar to post, it is thought that loft space could be easily rented for studios. If apartment subsidies become available, new housing, as in the Wetzel proposal, should be confined to a portion of the parking lot and to the Boylston Street rooftops.

#### Commerce

Citizens and professionals had few specific ideas about business

use for the block. Commercial space would be used mainly for stores which would serve the immediate neighborhood; a few mention the concept of an 'anchor' store which would, it is hoped, draw customers from a wider area. One Citizen emphasized that parking and offices should be eliminated from consideration because these uses create "dead space," especially on evenings and weekends.

Partisans and Parcel tenants would not rule out parking since it might be useful and profitable. Offices on the upper stories also seem suitable; as one Partisan put it, office workers eat and shop. Two people would like to see a reasonably priced and attractive restaurant on the block since, as one retired resident pointed out, there is no pleasant place to meet a friend for lunch. The Waldorf Cafeteria/Burger 'n' Egg is now closed, and the building has been taken by the city for back taxes. No other local restaurant has yet become a substitute hangout for the senior population. But other Parcel users point out that since food is served at the pizza place, the drug store, and the State Deli, another restaurant would either not be viable or, if it succeeded, would endanger the prosperity of the existing restaurants.

The loss of two 5 & 10's to demolition on Massachusetts Avenue is a sore point with area residents. Parcel users hope that a small, independent 5 & 10 could be lured to the site. Brigham's, a chain ice cream store at the far end of Church Park, would be no match for an old fashioned ice cream parlor with a hand-made product. A good bakery would be bound to do well at a location frequented by so many hungry students from the schools of music. Since the State Deli, despite the name, is not a delicatessen, it is thought that a genuine delicatessen

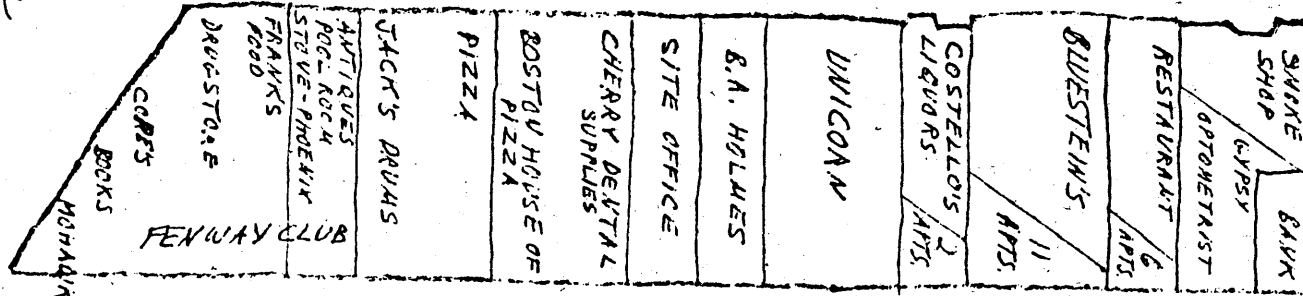
BOYLSTON

STREET

MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

130A.

HEMENWAY ST.

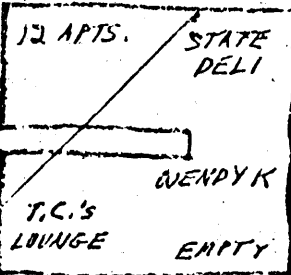


PARCEL 13

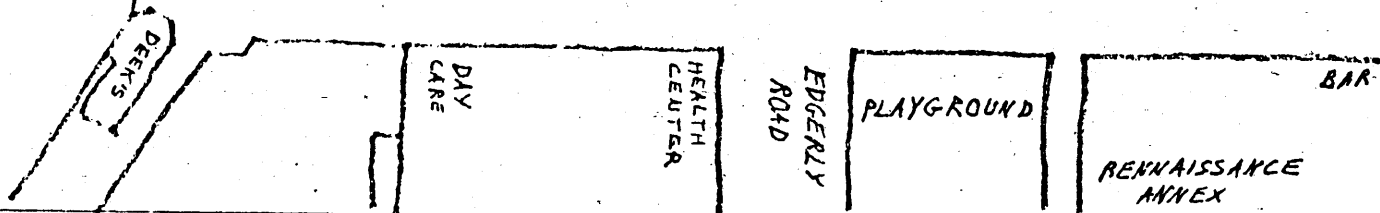
PARKING

PARKGATE  
ROOMS

10  
APTS.



HAVILAND ST.



and cheese shop, as an extension of the drug store, would surely prosper without competing with already established stores.

The other major potential for the block, according to Parcel tenants and users, is for more businesses related to the performing arts. There are two local dancing schools, one on Parcel 13, the other on Parcel 12. Many students in the area attend the New England Conservatory on Huntington Avenue, and the Boston Conservatory, with courses in singing, acting, and dancing, as well as music, is a near neighbor on Hemenway Street. The Berklee School of Music has even more impact on the businesses of Parcel 13; its newly remodeled Performance Center is now complete with many concernts scheduled. Stores selling theatrical make-up, costumes, and ballet shoes would be a neighborhood asset. Another advantage is that such businesses would probably not require ground floor space since their unique services would be sought out by patrons indigenous to the area.

The certified public accountant, the graphic arts firm, the veterinary supply business, and the dancing and karate schools are suitably located on upper floors. Since his trade does not depend on visibility in a high traffic area, it might be possible to move the Arthur Cherry Dental Supply store upstairs to make room for a ground floor business. The B. A. Holmes Furniture Company could expand next door into the vacant Unicorn building, and the pool room might be moved out of the basement to a conspicuous location.

Basement roomson Parcel 13 could probably be rented to musicians for practice sessions with minimal inconvenience to unwilling audiences. The Boston Conservatory is in need of expansion, and its president,

according to Boston Architectural Center instructor Peter Papesch, has expressed some interest in renting space on the site. Music Design, the recording studio in the Fenway Club, wants to rent an adjacent room, but has been turned down by the BRA management.

Over the past year, the pornographic book store was replaced by an automobile insurance agency. There is upstairs space available in Mr. Lubell's building and, on the ground floor, the Boston House of Pizza, unable to compete with the long established and lately renamed Back Bay House of Pizza next door, has closed down. This store is now the only vacant street level space on the block except in buildings owned by the BRA or the city. Jack's Drum Shop, once on its last legs, was sold to a new owner, who restocked the store and greatly improved its appearance. Business is reported to be brisk.

With these considerations in mind, Parcel activists see the problem of commercial use as largely a matter of identifying the kinds of stores and businesses now missing in the neighborhood, especially those which the character and existing functions of the surrounding streets would reinforce. A more aggressive marketing program, they believe, could fill existing vacancies. Suitable businesses could be contacted directly and urged to examine the available space. The commercial advantages of the immediate area should be explained to potential tenants.

### III. Implementation of the Rehabilitation Option

#### The Status of Parcel 13: Designation of Dedesignation?

One major unresolved question is whether Parcel 13 is to be designated as an urban renewal parcel, in the likely event that Robert LaCentra is unable to produce a feasible proposal in the next few months. BRA planners cling to the notion that the block must be developed by a single developer. They fear the loss of agency control over future events if all Parcel property were restored to individual ownership. Upgrading of the block could not be "guaranteed," and renovations would be "uncoordinated."<sup>32</sup>

Despite the BRA's reluctance to relinquish control over Parcel 13, the conclusion of the BRA Task Force Working Draft warns of "funding uncertainties." The total cost to complete the Fenway plan is said to be \$13,380,508. The project balance is reported at \$4,268,000, with perhaps another million available for 1976 from the Community Development Block Grant program. But of the \$4,268,000, \$3,400,000 is for relocation payments, and "it is not clear whether the money is now available since it may have been used to pay off the notes the BRA floated to fund the project." The main hope for completion of the plan thus lies in an Urgent Needs application to HUD, under a provision for the closing out of existing urban renewal projects nationwide. The Urgent Needs grant for the city of Boston is expected to be \$8,000,000 in 1977 and \$29,000,000 in 1978. The Working Draft urges speedy agreement on the development proposal to secure the necessary federal funding in time.<sup>33</sup> The figures in the BRA study differ remarkably with

those furnished six months previously in the budget for the Fenway Neighborhood Improvement Program, when both the total costs for plan completion and the available funds from the project balance and the Community Development Block Grant were put at \$6,377,590. Of this amount only \$932,870 was for relocation.

For those who favor rehabilitation, the important issue is to arrange that public funds, including the 3.3 million which was allotted for site acquisition, demolition, and relocation on Parcel 13, is spent instead for building repairs, a public park, and street improvements even if dedesignation occurs. They reason that the city has already planned the street improvements as part of the Fenway Plan and has managed to find funds for many intown vest pocket parks from federal programs not connected with urban renewal. Perhaps payments for repairs could be made to property owners in lieu of damages for the ten years of uncertainty and the consequent impairment of the utility and value of their property.

The Parcel 13 Citizen's Committee eventually came to the conclusion that dedesignation would be the course most likely to result in a pleasing outcome for two main reasons. A BRA planner declared that Section 8 rent subsidies were forbidden for rehabilitation projects with a mixture of residential and commercial uses, although there is at least one instance in which this policy was not applied. The lending operations of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency ground to a halt because the agency was unable, for a time, to market its bonds. This situation has lately been remedied by means of a co-insurance arrangement between the MHFA and HUD, and the agency's notes, once in the moral obligation

category, are now backed by the full faith and credit of the Commonwealth. At the urging of the chairman of the First National Bank, the legislature drastically cut state spending and raised taxes. With the state's credit rating lowered by Moody's Investor Services from Aa to A1, the bonds sold readily at 9% tax-free return.<sup>34</sup> But although the MHFA may now be expected to resume its usual activities, the prospects for the agency to finance the rehabilitation of Parcel 13 are slim because the MHFA is the intended source of financing for large new buildings on three other renewal parcels on Huntington Avenue and also for the rehabilitation of an apartment block on Parcel 7.

#### Thorough Rehabilitation: Parcel 13 as a Designated Renewal Site

With subsidized Section 8 residential rents, the problem of thoroughly rehabilitating Parcel 13 at a reasonable cost to commercial tenants may not be insuperable. Under these circumstances, it is possible to concoct a tentative program whereby Parcel 13 remains an urban renewal parcel but is rehabilitated by local interests instead of a single developer in such a way as to enhance the probability of meeting local needs. Any such plan must deal with the issues of tenure, financing, and protection of tenant interests.

#### Tenure:

The form of tenure is probably the most difficult problem, and owners and businesses who are interested in Parcel investment stress the necessity for a simple, easily understood arrangement. One possibility is the formation of a general and limited partnership, in which the sale of tax shelters yields syndication proceeds which could be



used towards an equity payment for building acquisition. Another arrangement might be the formation of a stock sharing corporation, like that negotiated by Peter Meade of the Hunneman Company for the purchase of a Brookline business block by five storekeepers, formerly tenants of the site. This arrangement minimized tax payments compared to a condominium form of tenure, which was also considered.<sup>35</sup> Such a corporation could also sell shares to nearby residents and businesses; thereby allowing wider local involvement than would probably be the case with a partnership. A disadvantage with a corporate form of tenure would be the difficulty in agreeing upon an equitable basis for the apportionment of stock shares. The market values of buildings, the amount of space occupied and rents paid, and the dollar amount of each investment would all have to be taken into consideration.

#### Financing:

Under either tenure arrangement, the BRA would have to use its good offices to help secure mortgage financing and to negotiate a generous cost write-down to the developing entity, with the understanding that the dollar difference between the BRA's acquisition costs and the actual proceeds to the BRA from sale at the write-down price would be treated as equity to reduce the amount to be borrowed.

#### Protection of tenant interests:

For residential tenants, it would be necessary to secure Section 8 subsidies to cover a substantial portion of the rehabilitated apartments. Since these subsidies often provide an income equal to the yield from market level rentals, the residential income might serve as

a source of internal subsidy for some commercial space. Another device to protect both business tenants and owners is to negotiate a lease at either a minimum rent or a fixed percentage of gross earnings, whichever would be more. Under such an agreement, owners would be assured of a flat rent from a business which was at least marginally viable, with a prospect of increasing income if the business should flourish. The tenant would have the assurance that rent increases would be more than offset by rising earnings while the availability of commercial space elsewhere would be an effective brake in case prosperity drove rents to uncompetitive levels.

Some parcel activists would like a community development corporation to have part ownership in the Parcel, although there is currently no local group capable of making a sizeable investment. But if a nominal investment were accepted, a CDC could monitor and influence the activities of the ownership and thereby protect local interests to some extent.

Although the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee would prefer some form of joint ownership, perhaps a single developer would win acceptance if he would agree to sell a substantial portion of the space as cooperatives at reasonable rates and under flexible arrangements which would, for example, permit impecunious tenants to buy only a partial interest in their stores, offices, or apartments.

Rehabilitation might be scheduled in stages to minimize the inconvenience of relocation, which is especially severe for ground floor commercial tenants.

### Ad Hoc Rehabilitation: Parcel 13 Dedesignated

#### Tenure:

If the BRA would renounce any further interest in Parcel 13 and sell off city-owned buildings to private owners, considerable upgrading might well result. Since little public money has been paid so far for acquisition, selling prices, based mainly on maintenance expenditures, should be reasonable, and there are a few businesses and property owners who might become interested in investing in Parcel properties. With uncertainty eliminated and morale restored, both new and old owners could be expected to increase rental income by actively recruiting suitable new tenants.

#### Financing and rehabilitation costs:

A major problem is to devise some legal means for transferring to private owners the savings in the public funds intended for acquisition, relocation, and site work. A low interest rehabilitation loan fund might be an alternative to damage awards for litigating and victimized owners and would also provide rehabilitation money to buyers of the city-owned buildings.

Parcel activists believe that the costs of rehabilitation would be decreased under the personal supervision of individual owners, since single landlords could make their own decisions about the extent of repairs and select small contractors for specific jobs. These beliefs are shared by E. F. Schumacher and I. D. Turner, who criticize the usual assumption of economies of scale. Especially in housing construction it seems that large scale projects often cause diseconomies. Turner

makes the case for the efficiency and flexibility of using small building components as opposed to large packaged units. He estimates savings of 20% for owners acting as their own general contractors when building new single family houses (although no figures are available for rehabilitation). Both authors also stress the importance of methods which increase the use of labor instead of expensive materials, mass production, and sophisticated technology.<sup>36</sup>

A study of self-help builders in the Greater Boston area shows that quality control was a major factor next to cost savings in the decision to build themselves.<sup>37</sup> Like small businessmen, owner-builders and rehabilitators seem to want to control and manipulate their surroundings; they would rather not accept the fait accompli of standard housing, just as storekeepers reject the usual job with a boss. Both individual control of housing and individual proprietorship are non-alienating activities which are beneficial to the person concerned and harmless to society. Schumacher praises the "social utility" of "the private property of the working proprietor", which is "small scale, personal, and local." This viewpoint is shared by Parcel activists.

#### Protection of tenant interests:

The surest protection for Parcel tenants are the conditions which the BRA might attach to an arrangement for dedesignation. One possibility is to limit to 6% the dividends which could be realized from new investment of public funds for repairs. Dedesignation might also require landlords to make every effort to secure Section 8 subsidies for residential tenants and to lease commercial space at a fixed and

reasonable percentage of the tenant's gross earnings, above a negotiated minimum rent. Although the City Council voted down rent control for apartments vacated after December 31, 1975, it might be agreed that the rent control board would have jurisdiction over apartments occupied by the same tenants before and after that date, even if temporary relocation is required for repairs. Relocation assistance payments are permitted by law for dedesignated parcels until final close-out of the Fenway Urban Renewal Plan. A final condition might require the formation of a tenant management association to include both residents and business people. At the rehabilitated Hemenway buildings, under the management of Edwin Abrams, residents assist in tenant selection and have access to records on rental income and operating and amortization costs. Examination of the so-called model lease of the Boston Housing Authority might suggest provisions for a lease applicable to all Parcel apartments and rooms.

#### Programs and Resources

Whether Parcel 13 is dedesignated or remains an urban renewal site, there are a variety of financial arrangements and design resources which might apply to any of the rehabilitation plans outlined above. A new source of mortgage financing is the program of the Cranston-Brooke Act with interest rates of  $8\frac{1}{4}\%$ .<sup>39</sup> Although the Section 202 Elderly Housing Program is for non-profit sponsors, perhaps it could be applied to the Parkgate for congregate housing (a recently coined euphemism for rooming houses), as a non-profit sector within the overall project. Another incentive for rehabilitation is Section 121A of the Massachu-

setts General Laws, which provides for property taxes at a negotiated percentage (about 16 to 20%) of gross income. This tax break must be granted by the City Council, and since that body has passed a resolution favoring rehabilitation of the Parcel and the continuing tenancy of the present residents and storekeepers, a favorable response might be expected. The city also sponsors a modest program for improving the facades of local business blocks.

Individual businesses might make use of the Small Business Administration for help in securing bank loans and for business education programs as well. Owners and businesses could also make use of the federal work-study program to get design advice at a reasonable cost. Students at the Boston Architectural Center, some of whom have already participated in Fenway projects, could provide architectural assistance. The Massachusetts College of Art and several nearby schools of commercial art might work with storekeepers on improving signs and window displays. Perhaps there are some work-study eligible business or law students capable of devising a stock-sharing corporation or a partnership.

Since the fate of Parcel 12 is inextricably tied to that of Parcel 13 (both parcels impede Massachusetts Avenue widening and present, to the aesthete's eye, an outlandish contrast to the white slab of Church Park), the inclusion of both parcels in a rehabilitation program might enhance the appeal of that option.

#### IV. Conclusions

Parcel 13 is a tiny piece of real estate typical of many city blocks in older cities all over the United States. Although it is only one portion of the Fenway Plan, Parcel 13 is also a typical instance of the sort of massive renewal planning which in recent years has been frustrated by feasibility problems and resistance from local residents.

#### Changes on Parcel 13

The Fenway Urban Renewal Plan produced several detrimental effects. Property owners, expecting eventual demolition of their buildings, curtailed spending for maintenance. Consequently, less income was derived from rents, and some space became totally unmarketable. Declining income coupled with rising tax assessments and operating costs inspired some owners to request takeover by the BRA, whose evident policy was to encourage both business and residential vacancies in order to reduce management and relocation costs. From 1960 to 1970 the residential population remained stable, but from 1970 to 1975, after the effects of disinvestment became manifest, population declined by 21.5%.

#### Changes in the Fenway

There were also significant changes in the rest of the Fenway. Demolition of commercial and residential buildings deprived residents and large and inexpensive apartments, and the number and variety of shopping facilities were greatly reduced. In the late sixties, the plan probably encouraged some owners to renovate side street buildings and raise rents, but more recently, scarcity of financing, Rent Control, and the stagnation of progress with the plan itself has dampened the desire to upgrade

properties.

Demographic changes were also striking. Many elderly residents and families were replaced by 'unrelated individuals,' students and working young people, who create sufficient demand for short-term housing to make extensive renovations unnecessary. The high vacancy rate, which is counted at one point in time, can probably be explained by the enormous increase in the proportions of transient households. The rise in the proportion of young people seeking residency in the Fenway cannot be attributed to the Fenway Plan, but the fact that families and elderly people have made room for them can be. The Fenway Plan also is partly responsible for the striking shift in family income distribution caused by the removal of many residents of low and moderate income and the in-migration of families with higher incomes.

#### Causation

Causation of change in the Fenway cannot be diagrammed in a tidy fashion; causes have several effects; the effects in their turn become causes of other effects. Sometimes the process works backward, as causative elements are reinforced by the effects they have produced.

Initially, changes were mainly the result of the plan itself (except that the expansion of local colleges was largely responsible for the increase in housing demand by young people.) Later, exogenous causative conditions -- that is, the general economic downturn and diminished funding caused by revised federal programs for assisting major cities, interacted with forces endogenous to the Fenway Plan to bring progress in renewal almost to a standstill.



The very existence of the Fenway Plan made permanent residents more aware of local issues and spurred the formation of local organizations. When promised benefits failed to materialize, many of the less affluent tenants became convinced that full implementation of the plan would be harmful to their interests. This conviction was reinforced by the timing of construction projects. Buildings were demolished long before developers were ready to build, and the hotel, the Church Park apartments, and the Church's 'core area' were all in the building stage before firm proposals for an adequate number of inexpensive apartments had been put forth. This sequence was due to the relative ease and expediency of first constructing inherently profitable projects.

The concern of permanent tenants turned to anger, and a militant resistance movement sprang up. Demonstrations, the court suit, and the struggle for a PAC effectively stalled progress with the Fenway Plan during a period when, in retrospect, time was running out for federal assistance with large renewal projects. By the time legal impediments to the plan were removed, economic recession and decreasing federal funding jointly intervened in the situation, replacing the forces of local resistance in forestalling completion of the plan. For landlords and storekeepers, belief in inevitable demolition gave way to doubt, but conditions of uncertainty only reinforced a decline in market activity and a disinclination to invest in maintenance and expansion.

#### Need versus Feasibility

An underlying theme of this paper has been the constant, if often unrecognized, contradiction between financial feasibility and satisfying

the needs of the neighborhood. Economically it seemed more feasible to finance a profitable rectangle with an affluent developer than to endorse and accomplish the projects of people without financial clout or professional skills. Aesthetically it was tidier to substitute the simple geometry of new construction than to improve an eclectic conglomeration of buildings with shabby exteriors and eccentric usage.

In 1965 planners apparently thought that development plans would be bound to have a favorable impact on the general prosperity. This faith made it unnecessary to be more precise about the methods of creating and distributing the benefits of development. Since need was underestimated, planners assumed that federal subsidies would somehow suffice.

As the Fenway Plan took shape, the contrast between the desirable and the actually attainable was gradually exposed. The extent to which the issue of financial feasibility came to override all social and aesthetic criteria for development was rather a surprise, not only to non-professional residents, but also to some of the planners.

So far, the experience with Parcel 13 and the rest of the Fenway Plan suggests that urban renewal places local residents and business people in a double bind. Successful development prices many people out of the area; failure of renewal plans somewhat enhances the likelihood of continued occupancy, but in an increasingly shabby neighborhood.



## Notes

## Part One

1. Information for this section was gathered at the office of the city assessor, the Building Department, the Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, from interviews, and from a survey of Parcel 13 prepared by Lee Stanton and Deborah Snyder of the Fenway Project Area Committee Staff.
2. This restaurant closed again a few months later.
3. The drum shop is now under new management after having closed for several weeks.
4. the Ledger, Feb. 7, 1975, p. 3, "Residents, businesses owners fight to keep 'Parcel 13' as their home," by Barbara Brown.
5. Frank's Food Shop was burned out on Saturday night, May 17, 1975.
6. From an interview by Karla Rideout of the Parcel 13 Citizens' Committee, March 23, 1973.
7. From an interview by Karla Rideout, March 19, 1973.
8. Karla Rideout interview, May 4, 1973.
9. The second week of April, 1975, seven excursions were made to observe activity and count pedestrians at various times of the day. Remarks in this section are based as well on more casual observations over the past four years.
10. These figures are taken from the Parcel 13 Residential and Commercial Survey of the Fenway Project Area Committee, prepared by Lee Stanton and Deborah Snyder.

## Part Two

1. the Fenway News, October, 1974, p. 1, "Luxury Tower Plans Threaten Fenway," by Winston Warfield.
2. From an interview by Karla Rideout, April 27, 1973.
3. Testimony at Fenway Urban Renewal Plan hearing at Horticultural Hall, November 19, 1965.
4. the FenPAC Newsletter, May, 1975.
5. Lynch, Kevin, The Image of the City, Cambridge, 1960, ch. III.
6. the Fenway News, December, 1974.
7. Sources are the BRA Data Sheet on Development Parcels, FenPAC records, and information from building managers.
8. This figure includes 29 units which are scheduled for eventual demolition.
9. Boston Sunday Globe, spring 1975, real estate advertisement.
10. From an interview by Karla Rideout, April 27, 1973.
11. From an interview by Karla Rideout, April 16, 1973.

## Part Three

1. Fact Sheets, Urban Renewal Projects, Boston Redevelopment Authority, August, 1974.
2. Robert Kenney, BRA Director, memo to staff, February 4, 1971.
3. All quotations in this section are from The Fenway Urban Renewal Plan, Boston Redevelopment Authority, November 1, 1965, pp. 5-9.
4. This and the preceding quotations in this section are from the mimeographed transcript of the hearing.
5. These quotations are from mimeographed leaflets.

6. Quotations are from community slate campaign literature.
7. the Fenway News, May, 1975, p. 5, "The Common Task: the Common Good," by Rosaria Salerno, O.S.B.
8. From an interview with a FIG member.
9. From an interview with a member of the Fenway Youth Activities Committee.
10. From an interview with a Parcel 13 resident.
11. From an interview with a Health Center board member.
12. From an interview with a SABPOA member.
13. From a letter from John Wohlbarst, FenPAC member-at-large, to the Ledger, Friday, October 10, 1975, p. 8.
14. From a letter from Mrs. James V. Garvey, a homeowner, to the Ledger, volume 38, no. 18.
15. Idem.
16. From an interview with a member of FenPAC and SABPOA.
17. From an interview with a member of the Saint Botolph Citizens' Committee.
18. Idem.
19. From an interview with a SABPOA landlord.
20. From an interview with a Fenway employee.
21. From an interview with a member of the Saint Botolph Citizens' Committee.

#### Part Four

1. Suffolk County Registry of Deeds and Land Court Registry; memorandum from Director Robert Kenney to BRA board, dated July, 1972.

2. Jones versus Lynn, Civil Action no. 72-3621-C, U.S. District Court, May 29, 1974.
3. the Fenway News, Sept., 1974, p. 1, "Ode to the BRA," by Mary Jayne Lavrakas.
4. the Ledger, Aug. 30, 1974, pp. 2, 23, "Redevelopment in Fenway: who knows?", by Jane White.
5. the Ledger, Dec. 20, 1974, "FenPAC gets short notice of buildings-tax agreement," by Barbara Brown.
6. FenPAC Minutes, Dec. 21, 1974, pp. 3, 5, 17, 18. the Ledger, Dec. 27, 1974, "FenPAC wants area to profit from Parcel 13."
7. the Ledger, Jan. 31, 1975, p. 17, "FenPAC to study Parcel 13; hears halfway house request," by Debbi Loomis. FenPAC Newsletter, February, 1975.
8. Ralph Bennett's report to PAC proposal analysis committee, Jan. 29, 1975, p. 1.
9. Letter from Joseph Berlandi to FenPAC, Feb. 24, 1975.
10. FenPAC Minutes, April, 22, 1975.
11. the Fenway News, July, 1975, p. 5, "Parcel 13: The Citizens vs. the Planners," by Merna Brostoff.
12. Parcel 13 Planning Research, Summary and Recommendations, July 3, 1975, 11 pp.
13. Parcel 13 Studies, Part I: Urban Design Study.
14. Parcel 13 Studies, Part II: Design Alternatives for Parcel 13.
15. Parcel 13 Studies, Part III: Summary and Recommendations.
16. FenPAC Minutes, July 8, 1975, p. 6.
17. FenPAC Minutes, July 8, 1975, p. 7.

18. FenPAC Minutes, Aug. 25, 1975.
19. BRA Conference Minutes, Sept. 25, 1975.
20. Working Draft for Community Review, p. 17.
21. Appendix to Working Draft, p. 2.
22. Appendix, p. 3.
23. Appendix, pp. 4, 5.
24. Working Draft, pp. 23, 26, 27.
25. Working Draft, p. 26.
26. Appendix, p. 5.
27. Appendix, p. 6.
28. Working Draft, p. 29.
29. Comments on the Parcel 13 Task Force Preliminary Draft Report, p. 1.
30. Comments on Draft Report, p. 5.
31. Comments on Draft Report, p. 4.
32. Working Draft, p. 29.
33. Working Draft, p. 30.
34. Boston Sunday Globe, March 14, 1976, pp. A17, A21, "How Massachusetts got itself out of hock," by Robert Lenzer.
35. Boston Sunday Globe, 1975, Real Estate section, "Storekeepers buy Brookline block," by J. William Riley.
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